The object discussed in this paper (Pl. I, 1) is a clay seal-impression, once used to authorise an official document written on papyrus. The document was kept, among many others, in a public or private archive which was eventually destroyed by fire. The papyri thus perished whereas the sealings were fired in varying degrees, and therefore survived. This find is now known as « The Edfu Hoard », from the name of the modern-day Egyptian town where the sealings were unearthed (1).

The minute seal-impression discussed here distinguishes itself from the rest of the hoard, where Ptolemaic portraits of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC predominate. All kings from Ptolemy Epiphanes to Kleopatra VII are

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This paper is part of a wider project leading to the publication of the « Edfu hoard » of clay seal-impressions as a single find. A British Academy Post-doctoral Fellowship (1993-1996) enabled me to initiate research on the hoard; the Academy also funded my study visits to Toronto and Amsterdam in 1996. Part of the photographic expenses was covered with a grant by the Scouloudi Foundation (Institute of Historical Research, University of London). At Oxford, I had the privilege of the advice, encouragement, and support of Professor Sir John Boardman. Professor Helmut Kyrieleis (Berlin) made me the honour of his interest and attention and helped me secure the funding for part of the project and Professor Herwig Maehler (London) generously shared with me his interest in the hoard and the Ptolemies in general. Robert L. Wilkins and Alison Coveley (Institute of Archaeology, Oxford) printed the negatives I had shot on location. Administration and staff of the two Museums principally involved offered me their support and kind co-operation, and especially: Alison Easson (ROM); E.A. Knox (ROM); Ron Leenheer (APM); R.A. Lunsingh Scheurleer (APM). Bob Hindley's kind hospitality made my stay in Toronto (May-June 1996) particularly enjoyable. The present paper benefited considerably from the suggestions offered by François de Callatay, who very kindly commented on an earlier draft.

(1) After its discovery in 1905, the hoard, numbering about 700 pieces, was divided between the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto and the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. See M.A. MURRAY, Ptolemaic Clay Sealings, in ZA, 44, 1907, p. 62-70 and J.G. MILNE, Ptolemaic Seal Impressions, in JHS, 36, 1916, p. 87-101 for early assessments of the Toronto part of the hoard; and D. PLANTZOS, Female Portrait Types from the Edfu Hoard of Clay Seal-Impressions, in M.-F. BOUSSAC and A. INVERNIZZI (eds), Archives et sceaux du monde hellénistique (BCH Suppl., 29), Athens, 1996, p. 307-313 for a brief discussion of the sealings in Amsterdam.
represented, most of their consorts and offspring, as well as a few notable predecessors. This seal, on the other hand, reproduces what we might call «the Seleucid portrait type» as studied in the coinage struck by the kings of Syria. As I hope to show here, the man on the seal-impression from Edfu is Antiochos IV Epiphanes, king of Syria from 175 to 164 BC. His single representation in a context otherwise crowded by members of the Ptolemaic dynasty is not accidental, but should be related to contemporary historical events, notably the brief occupation of Egypt by the Syrian army in 169-168 BC. As will be discussed below, the seal cannot be used to clarify the mystery of Antiochos’ presence in Egypt in these years, but deserves a place among the king’s known portraits. Some other, roughly contemporary artefacts will also need to be discussed here, coinage or other minor crafts, some related to Antiochos, and some related to Ptolemy Philometor, Egypt’s legitimate ruler at the time.

The fifth Syrian War (202-195 BC) ended with a treaty, sanctioned by Rome, between Antiochos III of Syria and Ptolemy Epiphanes (2). Following Antiochos’ successes in the war, Coele-Syria was subjugated by the kingdom of Syria, and was permanently lost for the Ptolemies. The conflict between the two monarchies was picked up again in 171 BC by Antiochos IV, who seems to have taken exception in the war preparations undertaken in Egypt by Eulaios and Lenaios, advisers to Ptolemy Philometor, who was still under age at the time (3). Antiochos invaded Egypt first in 169 BC, captured Pelusion and effectively conquered Egypt apart from Alexandria (4). Philometor was dethroned by the Alexandrians, who favoured his younger brother, Physkon. Antiochos left the two kings, indeed his nephews (5), to settle their dispute and reach a reconciliation. In 168 BC Antiochos occupied Cyprus and invaded Egypt for a second time. Rome intervened, asking the Syrian king to evacuate all Ptolemaic lands (6). After the Roman envoy Popillius Laenas confronted Antiochos in the Alexandrian suburb of Eleusis, the latter decided to comply with the Senate’s requests and left Egypt (7).

During his short-lived occupation of Egypt, Antiochos IV appears to have struck coinage and issued royal edicts (8). Porphyry, perhaps following lost Polybian passages, reports that Antiochos was crowned Pharaoh

(2) Polyb., 18. 49.
(3) Thus Diod., 30. 15-17; other authorities put the blame directly on Antiochos: Livy 42. 29. 5; Justi., 34. 2. 7; App., Syr., 66; 1 Macc., 1. 16; Joseph., AJ, 12. 242.
(5) Antiochos IV was the brother of Kleopatra I, who was married to Ptolemy Epi­phanes (their parents were Antiochos III and Laodike of Syria).
(6) Polyb., 29. 27; Livy, 45. 12-13.
at Memphis (9). Porphyry’s account was questioned by Bevan (10) but accepted by Otto (11) and Préaux (12). Thirty years later, Mørkholm stated his conviction that Porphyry’s account is unreliable (13). Otto and Préaux had based their optimism on a fragmentary papyrus from Tebtunis where king Antiochos [IV] appears to be issuing a royal edict to the cleruchs in the Krokodilopolite nome (14). Mørkholm is right to point out, however, that Antiochos is in the text styled « king » because he is the king of Syria, though not necessarily a crowned king of Egypt. Antiochos was nevertheless in the position to address the citizens of a conquered land with a royal prostagma, and naturally had the authority to strike coins to meet his needs.

Regardless of the validity or not of Porphyry’s testimony, it is clear that Antiochos played a significant part in the affairs of Egypt in the period 170-168 BC. The seal from the long-known hoard seems to relate to the events of those years: the small (17 x 13 mm), grey clay seal-impression shows a male head to the right, wearing narrow diadem. The shape of the impression shows that it was produced by a metal ring with oval, slightly elongated bezel (15). The seal is of high artistic quality, although the impression is rather poor, and the sealing damaged in places. Its subject matter is easily distinguished from any other portrait in the Edfu hoard. The portrait is strongly idealistic, with well-defined features. The forehead is wide, possibly (although the impression is not clear) with receding hairline. The bulging eye-brow shades the man’s elongated, well-shaped eyes. The nose is short, and slightly curved, the lips are small and tight, the chin round and prominent. The hair is short and neatly cropped, forming the star-shaped patterns at the back of the head typical of Seleucid portraits in coinage. The narrow diadem confirms the Seleucid origin of the seal. Although the impression is not deep enough, there are traces of flattering bands along the shoulders of the man. Milne had already noticed « some resemblance » of the seal to the coin portraits of Antiochos IV, however he did not proceed with a firm identification (16). The type portrayed in the seal is very close to the portrait type of Antiochos IV as it appears on his coinage, and especially so

(9) FGrH 260 F 49a.
(14) P.Tebt. 698: Βασιλιάς Αντίοχου προστάξαντος: | τοῖς ἐν τῶι Κροκοδιλοπόλει κληροῦ| [χοί ... (By decree of king Antiochus: To the cleruchs in the Krokodilopolite nome ...)
the coins minted in Ptolemais-Ace in the period 170-168 BC. A series of tetradrachms depict the king on the obverse with a star above his head (Pl. I, 2) (17). On a close variant, Antiochos is shown with two stars attached to the waving bands of his diadem (18). Similar types have been identified on seal-impressions from Orchoi (cf. Pl. II, 3) (19). Admittedly, the seal portrait might compare well with other royal portrait types of the Hellenistic period, even non-Seleucid ones, such as the monetary portrait of Euthydemos I of Bactria (c. 230-200 BC) (20) and that of some of his successors. Nevertheless, historical probability weighs in favour of the seal's identification with Antiochos.

Even if we do not accept Porphyry's account on Antiochos' coronation as Pharaoh, a seal of the king of Syria is not out of context in an archive of that period, although it cannot be used to suggest that Antiochos had usurped the crown of Egypt. As indicated by the Tebtunis papyrus mentioned above, Antiochos' involvement in the affairs of Egypt justifies the presence of a document sealed by one of his officers, or the king himself, in the Edfu archive. A demotic text containing an account related to Antiochos's departure from Egypt informs us that «Kleon (or Kreon?)», the agent of Antiochos, had not yet left Memphis on 11 July 168 (21).


(19) The Babylonian city of Uruk was hellenised under the Seleucids, its Greek name being Orchoi. The hoard from Orchoi, parts of which have been found during various expeditions or clandestine excavations, is now dispersed in many museums and collections around the world. An account of all the different locations of parts of the hoard in the 1920s is given in M.I. Rostovtzeff, Seleucid Babylonia: Bullae and Seals of Clay with Greek Inscriptions, in YCIS, 3, 1932, p. 3-114; see also D. Plantzos, Hellenistic Engraved Gems, Oxford, 1999, p. 30-31. The closest parallels to Antiochos' coin portraits feature a bust in radiate crown, surviving on many examples: M.I. Rostovtzeff, op. cit., no. 67, pl. V.2; G.M.A. Richter, Engraved Gems of the Greeks and Etruscans, London, 1968, nos 659-659. For the portrait type, see R. Fleischer, Studien zur Seleukidischen Kunst; I. Herrscherbildnisse, Mainz-am-Rhein, 1991, no. 28b, with earlier bibliography.

(20) O. Möllholm, op. cit. (note 18), nos 383-387.

(21) Several drafts exist of a text written on ostraka by an Egyptian priest, Ḥor of Sebennytos, claiming to have foreseen Antiochos' defeat in a dream. Ḥor reported his dream to Irenaios the strategos, and then sent a letter to «the Pharaohs ... in Alexandria» (i.e. kings Philometor and Physkon). The text of one of the ostraka reads: «From Ḥor the scribe, a man in the town of Isis ... in the nome (of) Sebennytos. ... I reported the matter to Irenaios, who was strategos, (in) year 2, Paoni, day 11 (= 11 July 168). Kleon (or Kreon?), the agent of Antiochos, had not yet left Memphis.»; J.D. Ray, The Archive of Ḥor, London, 1976, p. 14-20; M.M. Austin, The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest, Cambridge, 1981, no. 165.
In fact Antiochos himself had been residing in the city, with Philometor, since their reconciliation in May of that year (23). It is possible that, for a brief time, Antiochos was acting as young Ptolemy’s guardian (24). When Physkon and Kleopatra [II] were declared kings in Alexandria, Antiochos and his army left Memphis, tried to conquer Alexandria but failed, and subsequently left Egypt (25).

Otto’s discussion of Antiochos’ presence in Egypt and the truth of Porphyry’s account (26) involves two gold finger rings in the Louvre (Pl. I, 4 and 5) for which he accepts an old identification with the Syrian king (26). As the presumed Antiochos is portrayed as Pharaoh in one of the two rings, Porphyry’s text gains credit, according to Otto and Préaux, and especially the former, who used it to prove that Antiochos IV had indeed been crowned at Memphis. It is certainly unwise to base a conjecture of serious historical repercussions on such vague and non-corroborated iconographical evidence. Furthermore, it is more likely that the two rings portray Ptolemy Philometor. The portrait coinage of this king presents great diversion in physiognomy and typology (27). Some of this may be due to the fact that his early portraiture, when the king was still a child, was influenced by that of his father. As Philometor was under the age of ten when he succeeded Epiphanes, it is perhaps reasonable to find him depicted as a younger version of his predecessor, much closer to Epiphanes’ portrait type than in his later coinage.

A unique tetradrachm, however, of possible Alexandrian origin, presents a slightly different version of Philometor’s portrait (Pl. II, 6). He is shown in bust, wearing aegis and with a star over his shoulder. The reverse shows an eagle-on-thunderbolt (28). Kiang, who first studied the coin, based a good part of his argument on the two gold rings, for which he accepts a loose identification with Ptolemy Philometor proposed by

(22) O. MøRKHOLM, op. cit. (note 7), p. 80-81.
(23) Cf. LIVY, 45. 11. 10.
(24) POLYB., 28. 22. 1; LIVY, 45. 11. 1.
(26) J. SIEVEKING, Portraits d’Antiochus IV Épiphane, in RA, 1903, p. 343-346. The two rings are: Museum of the Louvre, Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, inv. nos. Bj 1092 and Bj 1093. Bj 1092 (Pl. I, 4) supports a large rectangular bezel (34 x 25 mm) portraying, in intaglio, a young man in Pharaonic regalia; Bj 1093 on the other hand (Pl. I, 5) is oval-shaped, with an intaglio (35 x 25 mm) evidently of the same man in Greek-fashioned diadem and chlamys. C. METZGER, La gloire d’Alexandrie, exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1998, p. 203; I.P. LAUBSCHER, Zur Bildtradition in ptolemäisch-römischer Zeit, in JdAI, 111, 1996, p. 242-244; G.M.A. RICHTER, op. cit. (note 19), nos. 625 and 626 offers earlier bibliography and an overview of previous attributions. And see below, note 31.
various scholars (29). Avoiding the obvious circularity of this argument, we can keep Kiang's valid die-study considerations (30) and allow for the two rings to be accepted as portraits of Philometor rather than Antiochus, though refraining from using them as first-hand evidence for either man's portrait type. A recent re-attribution of the two rings suggests their identification with Ptolemy IX or XI (31). Comparison, however, with the «regency octodrachm» in the British Museum (Pl. II, 7), where the king appears diademed on the obverse under the inscription ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, while Kleopatra I, his mother, is shown on the reverse, with sceptre over her shoulder and the inscription ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ (32), suggests beyond any reasonable doubt that the two rings and the coin portray the same man at different ages, hence the slight beard over the man's cheeks and chin shown on the rings. There is a clear emphasis on the same distinct features, such as the pointed, curved nose, the large eyes and sharp lips, that seem to connect Philometor with the portrait type of his father, whom he succeeded prematurely. Apart from the two Louvre rings, a third, much less impressive specimen today in the Kanellopoulos Museum in Athens seems most likely to portray the same man, Ptolemy Philometor (33).

A similar portrait to that from Edfu, but on a different medium, can find its place here: an ivory emblem which has been interpreted as an Alexandrian game counter (Pl. II, 8) shows the head of a man wearing

(29) See D. Kiang, op. cit. (note 28), 72, with n. 28-33 for an overview.
(30) D. Kiang, op. cit. (note 28), p. 74-76. The difference between this and the other Philometor portraits had originally encouraged speculation whether in fact the coin does not portray Philometor but his short-lived son Neos Philopator who ruled along his father for a while but was murdered by his uncle Ptolemy Physkon in 145 BC: H. Kyrieleis, op. cit. (note 27), p. 62. The subsequent appearance, however, of Philometor's «regency» portrait (Pl. II, 7; see below, with note 32), convinced the same scholar to withdraw his suggestion: H. Kyrieleis, Ein Bildnis des Königs Antiochos IV von Syrien (Winckelmannprogramm: Berlin, 127), Berlin, 1980, p. 19. Although the general physiognomy of the man on the silver tetradrachm comes across quite differently from the other Philometor coins, there is a number of features (oblong head, massive hair, almond-shaped eyes, long, skinny nose) that is repeated in all of them. The man on the silver tetradrachm is rather too old to be a portrait of a sixteen-year old (as Ptolemy Neos Philopator was when he died) and we should perhaps avoid the creation of a new coin type — and its historical implications — in favour of a more conservative approach. It is more likely that, in creating a portrait type for himself, the young king would have stayed closer to his father's representations than the New York tetradrachm seems to suggest.

(31) By P. Higgs and R. Ashton in S. Walker and P. Higgs (eds), Cleopatra of Egypt; from History to Myth, London, 2001, p. 67, nos 44-45.
(33) Athens, Pavlos Kanellopoulos Museum inv. no. 269. See R. Laffineur, Collection Paul Kanellopoulos (XV); Bijoux en or grecs et romains, in BCH, 104, 1980, p. 345-457, no. 127, where the portrait is attributed to Ptolemy Neos Philopator, on the basis of the argument once proposed by Kyrieleis, above note 30.
an elaborate diadem (a _strophion_) with flattering bands and similar features as the portrait on the seal-impression (34). Such objects have long been connected with Alexandria, although recorded find spots include Amrit and other places in the Lebanon and Syria, sites in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy (35). Furthermore, it is quite likely that at least some of the more refined emblems were not actually made to be used as counters. This is confirmed by the emblem discussed here, which bears on the back a crudely cut inscription reading ΗΡΑΚΛΑΣ (Herakles?), along with the signs V and E, the latter perhaps corrected from a Γ. It is more likely that the portrait on the ivory medallion was produced for decoration or display, perhaps as a propaganda piece, and that the lettering was added only later, when such pieces were used as game counters. The sharp contrast between the high quality of the portrait and the cursory scratching at the back suggests that they are not contemporary. Although it is reasonable to expect games involving such elaborate counters to have been popular in Alexandria in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, it does not follow that all un-provenanced pieces can be called « Alexandrian ». The portrait on the ivory disc is more idealised than that on the seal, and the tetradrachm on plate I, 2; instead, it comes closer to an earlier series of tetradrachms struck in Antioch, in 175-c. 173/2 BC (Pl. II, 9). They show Antiochos with diadem on the obverse and a tripod with lyre on the reverse, with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ (36).

A Ptolemaic identification is not necessary for the Paris medallion (37), even though its identification with Antiochos IV, as comparison with his coinage strongly suggests, is compatible with the king's active presence in Egypt in 169-68 BC. We hear that Antiochos presented a gold stater to every Greek inhabitant of Naucratis (38). Emblems like the Paris « game counter » would not have been valuable, but efficient enough to advertise the king's likeness.

(34) Paris. Cabinet des Médailles inv. no. A 19935-36; M. BIEBER, _The History of Greek and Roman Theatre_, Princeton, 1961, p. 246, with fig. 812i (where it is suggested, quite inexplicably, that such pieces were used as theatre tickets, an unnecessarily wasteful method of controlling admission to a Greek or Roman theatre); E. ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM, _Ruler Portraits on Roman Game Counters from Alexandria_, in _Eikones. Festschrift H. Jucker; Zwölftes Beiheschrift « Antike Kunst », Herausgegeben von der Vereinigung der Freunde Antiker Kunst_, Bern, 1980, p. 29-39, no. 16.

(35) E. ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM, _op. cit._ (note 34), p. 29, n. 3.

(36) O. MØRKHOLM, _op. cit._ (note 17), p. 8, no. A3-P5, with pl. I; P. GARDNER, _op. cit._ (note 17), p. 34, 4, pl. xi. 2.

(37) Pace E. ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM, _op. cit._ (note 34), p. 35 who recognises the Seleucid type portrayed on the disc (« Demetrius I » or « Alexander I ») but ignores these similarities because « it seems not very likely that an Alexandrian game counter should bear the portrait of a Seleucid ».

(38) POLYB., 28. 20. 11. On the matter of Antiochos' coinage during the Sixth Syrian war, see O. MØRKHOLM, _op. cit._ (note 17), p. 22-23 and Id., _op. cit._ (note 7), p. 81, with n. 68-69.
A royal seal of Antiochos IV of Syria
Planché I

1. Clay seal-impression, said to be from Edfu. 17 × 13 mm. Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, inv. no. 906. 12. 158. © the author.
A royal seal of Antiochos IV of Syria
plancher II


