



Seleucid empire (323–64 BC)

When Alexander III of Macedon (Alexander the Great) died in 323 BC, his territories were split among his generals; Seleucus Nicator became ruler of the eastern provinces (modern day Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and parts of Turkey, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan), starting the Seleucid empire. The empire became a major center for Hellenistic art, a mix between Greek and Middle Eastern artistic practices.



Coins

The first coins were developed in Lydia, western Turkey, by 650 BC. By the Seleucid period, coinage was in widespread use in Mesopotamia. Some of these coins were minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. Located where a major canal from the Euphrates River met the Tigris River, this great Hellenistic capital continued as a vigorous trading center throughout the Parthian period. Imagery on the coins reflects Greek cultural and stylistic influences, including Greek inscriptions.



On the front of A24016 is the head of Antiochus IV, bound with a diadem, on the ends of which are two stars. The reverse shows Zeus wearing a himation over his shoulder, seated on a throne.

A24016: Seleucid coin, Silver, Iran, Seleucid period, reign of Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (175-163 BC)