



DATED COINS OF THE TARKONDIMOTID DYNASTY

Wayne G. SAYLES¹

The history of Cilicia in general is fragmentary and poorly understood at best. Reliable source documents are scarce to non-existent for some periods. Ancient maps of Cilicia are often inaccurate. Contemporary historians and chroniclers of events in that corner of the ancient world tended to rely on second and third-hand accounts and events were sometimes tainted by special interests. Those who study the past today, and try to reconstruct that history with some semblance of truth and accuracy, are often aided by surviving tangible objects. Among them, are inscriptions in stone, works of narrative art and to a very large degree coins, tokens and amulets from antiquity. It's far from a perfect science, but these objects do “speak” to us in a way that human sources often do not. Coins have been called the “newspapers of their day”. Being a means of communication as well as a vehicle to promote commerce, they can help to confirm historical events or provide visual details that other sources may merely allude to or ignore altogether. The following discussion is offered to stimulate thought about a series of events, a small circle of people, and a period of radical change on the world stage that reached from the center of Rome to the most distant lands of what would soon become an empire.

Although remote, Anazarbus was once a place of great importance—rivaling the splendor of Tarsus with magnificent games and envious erudition. Today, we find that relatively little has been written about this once booming metropolis and its place in history—even less about its coinage. What little does exist is often outdated and frequently contested by differing scholarly opinions. Fortunately, that scene may be changing with a new wave of interest. The corpus of Roman coins from Anazarbus, compiled by Professor Ruprecht Ziegler, has helped draw attention to the wealth of numismatic material issued by this mint.² Ziegler's *magnum opus* begins with coins struck in the year 19 BC, marking the incorporation of Anazarbus as a Roman colony, and records 840 different dies spanning roughly 280 years. Nicholas L. Wright has published several studies that unravel some of the mystery about earlier days of Anazarbus, including an insightful paper in

¹ Wayne G. Sayles, özellikle Kilikya madeni paraları konusunda uzmanlaşmış Amerikalı bir nümismatist ve yazardır.

² Ziegler, Ruprecht. “Kaiser Heer und Städtisches Geld”, Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (1993).