

Tryphon's Sling Bullet from Dor*

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Dedicated to the memory of Yaron Dan

IN 1982 Schlesinger published a paper which discussed four sling bullets found within 100 m. of the remains of the ancient city of Dor.¹ Of the four sling bullets, two are decorated with a winged thunderbolt in relief, while a third is unadorned. The fourth, which is the subject of this study, is made of lead, as are two of the remaining three sling bullets, and is inscribed on both sides (Fig. 1; Pl. 19:A-C).²

Schlesinger offered the following reading of our sling bullet:³

obverse: ΤΡΥΦΩΝΟ

ΝΙΚΗ

reverse: ΠΡΟΣΕΥΞΑΙ

In addition, he observed that Diodotus-Tryphon, the guardian of Antiochus VI who subsequently murdered his ward, had fought at Dor against Antiochus VII Sidetes.⁴ He therefore plausibly sought to connect the sling bullet with that battle and attributed it to Antiochus Sidetes' army.

* I am most grateful to Prof. Ephraim Stern, director of the excavations at Dor, for permitting me to study the sling bullet and to Prof. Menahem Stern and Dr. Susan Sherwin-White for their careful reading of this paper. The photographs are by D. Harris and the drawings by Michal Ben-Gal. For an article on stamped jar-handles from Dor, see pp. 135-152.

¹ D. Schlesinger: A Lead Slingshot from Dor, *Qadmoniot* 15 (1982), p. 116 (Hebrew). The following abbreviations are used in this article: *BCH* — *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*; *BE* — *Bulletin épigraphique*; *BMC Phoenicia* — G.F. Hill: *Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Phoenicia*, London, 1910; *BMC Seleucid Kings* — P. Gardner: *Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: The Seleucid Kings of Syria*, London, 1878; *FGrHist* — *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*; *FHG* — *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*; *IG* — *Inscriptiones Graecae*; *NNM* — *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*; *RN* — *Revue numismatique*; *SNG* — *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*.

² Length 3.9 cm., width 1.9 cm., thickness 1.4 cm., weight 60 gr. In the following I will frequently use such inaccurate, but convenient, terms as inscription, strokes etc. The letters are, of course, in relief. Metallic sling bullets were made by pouring liquid metals (mostly lead) into moulds which sometimes bore engraved inscriptions and incised decorations. For such moulds, see D.M. Robinson: *Excavations at Olynthus*, X, Baltimore, 1941, p. 419, n. 148; J.-Y. Empereur: Collection P. Canellopoulos: *petits objets inscrits*, *BCH* 105 (1981), p. 555.

³ Above, n. 1.

⁴ 1 Macc. 15:10-14, 25-26, 37; Josephus, *War* 1.50; *Ant.* 13.223-224; Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. *Δῶρος* = Charax of Pergamon, *FGrHist* 103 F 29. See also Syncellus, *Chronographia*, ed. G. Dindorf, Bonn, 1829, pp. 552-553.

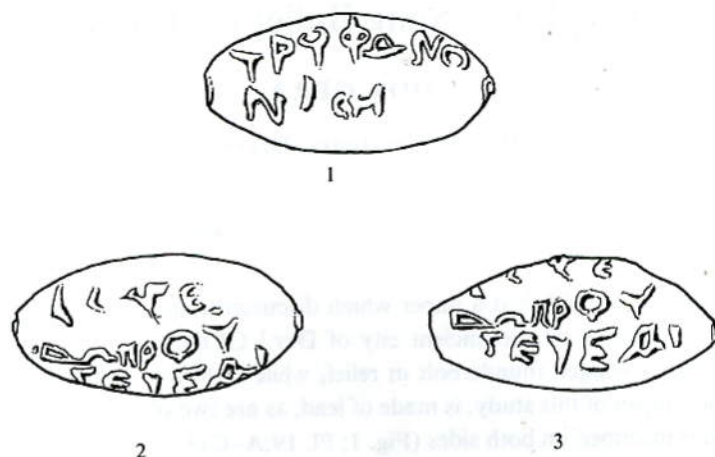


Fig. 1. The sling bullet, actual size. 1—obverse; 2—reverse, upper part; 3—reverse, lower part.

My reading of the obverse is essentially in agreement with that of the first editor:

ΤΡΥΦΩΝΟ
ΝΙΚΗ

However, it should be noted that only the right vertical stroke of the *eta* is preserved. Furthermore, the *iota* and *eta* are placed midway between the first line and the *nu* and *kappa* of line 2.

My reading of the reverse is entirely different from the one cited above. It is as follows:

ΛΥΕ
ΔΩΠΡΟΥ
ΓΕΥΣΑΙ

Line 1 contains the Phoenician letter *dalet* (although *resh* is also possible), then the year sign L, followed by a bird in relief flying to the left and an *epsilon* which therefore denotes a date, i.e. year 5.⁵

As we have seen, Schlesinger believes that the sling bullet had been in the possession of one of Antiochus VII's slingers, presumably because he understands the phrase Τρύφωνο νίκη to mean 'victory over Tryphon'. However, this phrase can also mean 'victory of Tryphon'.⁶ The association of νίκη with a proper name in the genitive, such as we have here, is a well-attested formula in Greek epigraphy. The south-western

⁵ The *epsilon* is 4 mm. high, as are the letters of line 3 and the final three letters of line 2. The rest of the letters in line 2 are much smaller, only 2.5 mm. in height. The Phoenician letter in line 1 is 3 mm. high and the year sign L is approximately 1.5 mm. high.

⁶ See, e.g., Polybius 27.9.1 versus 21.39.1.

corner of Asia Minor is particularly rich in inscriptions of this kind.⁷ As early as 1893 Reinach expressed the view that these inscriptions are related to contests that took place in the gymnasium and were set up by friends of the contestants to convey their good wishes for a victory. Hence these inscriptions refer to a potential victory rather than a real one.⁸ In the course of this century Reinach's view has received widespread support.⁹

Our inscription is not, of course, in the realm of the gymnasium, but in that of war. However, we know that in Egypt and Asia strong links were maintained between the army and the gymnasia and, in general, the martial arts were taught in gymnasia as a preparation for army life.¹⁰ More important for our purposes is the fact that these 'gymnastic' inscriptions refer to a potential, rather than actual, victory and also that the genitive is one of the subject and not the object.

Even more closely related to our subject are three clay sling bullets bearing the inscription Ἀθηνίωνος νίκη, understood as an acclamation for the victory of Athenion, who led a slave revolt in Sicily between 104 and 101 B.C.E.¹¹ We can also see that this formula was used in acclamations referring to the future from a similar type of inscription which associates νίκη with the name of a god or a goddess in the genitive. Sling bullets from Sicily offer us a few examples: νίκη Ἀθά(νας), νίκη Δίος, Ἡρακλέος νίκη and others.¹² Perhaps the most substantial example of this usage is to be found in 2 Maccabees. During Lysias' second campaign in Judaea, the Jews attacked the Seleucid army after a prearranged signal had been given. The signal was the battle cry Θεοῦ νίκη (2 Macc. 13:15).¹³ Since the cry served as a signal to commence the attack, it is clear that 'God's victory' was a wish pertaining to the future. If God were to be victorious, so would be his followers. In the same way the inscription on our sling bullet is to be understood as expressing a wish for Tryphon's victory.

⁷ To quote only a few examples, see A. Rehm: *Milet*, I, 9, Berlin, 1928, Nos. 385–397; B. Haussoulier: *Inscriptions d'Halicarnasse*, *BCH* 4 (1880), p. 403, No. 15; G. Cousin and C. Diehl: *Inscriptions d'Halicarnasse*, *BCH* 14 (1890), pp. 114–118, No. 18; cf. J. and L. Robert: *BE* (1950), No. 165. See also nn. 8 and 9 below.

⁸ T. Reinach: *Inscriptions d'Iasos*, *Revue des études grecques* 6 (1893), pp. 197–203, Nos. 44–61.

⁹ J. and L. Robert (above, n. 7); T. Pekáry: *Inschriftenfunde aus Milet 1959*, *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 15 (1965), p. 130, Nos. 21, 23, 24; see however J. Crampa: *Labraunda*, III, 2, Stockholm, 1972, p. 160, Nos. 76–80.

¹⁰ M. Launey: *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques*, II, Paris, 1950, pp. 813–874.

¹¹ *IG* XIV, 2407, 8 a–c; Diodorus Siculus, 36.5.1–4; 7.1–10.1. Cf. G. Manganaro: *Monete e ghiande iscritte degli schiavi ribelli in Sicilia*, *Chiron* 12 (1982), pp. 240–242.

¹² *IG* XIV, 2407, 1–7; cf. M. Guarducci: *Epigrafi greca*, II, Rome, 1969, p. 523.

¹³ The reading of the manuscripts here is not unanimous. Most of the Lucianic MSS. have Θεοῦ νίκη, but the generally accepted reading is Θεοῦ νικην. However, the inscriptions referred to above are decisively in favour of the Lucianic tradition. Consequently, the acclamation in 2 Macc. 8:23 should similarly be read Θεοῦ βοήθεια rather than Θεοῦ βοήθειας, again in accordance with the Lucianic MSS. For the MS. tradition, see *Maccabaeorum Liber II, Septuaginta* IX, 2, ed. R. Hanhart, Göttingen, 1976, *ad loc.* Hanhart follows A. Rahlfs: *Septuaginta*, I, Stuttgart, 1935, *ad loc.*, and F.-M. Abel: *Les livres des Maccabées*, Paris, 1949, *ad loc.* For military signals and passwords given in the nominative, see Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.8.16; 6.5.25 and *Cyropaedia* 7.1.10.

The conclusive proof that the acclamation on the obverse expresses the wish that Tryphon be victorious is found on the reverse, where there are two hints that the sling bullet was cast in Dor, one of Tryphon's cities. The Phoenician *dalet* found on the reverse is hardly surprising, for Dor was a Phoenician city.¹⁴ This *dalet* is, in all probability, an abbreviation of the city's name דור/דאר,¹⁵ since we know of a number of Phoenician coins which bear the initial of the place where they were minted.¹⁶

A further indication that the sling bullet originated in Dor is found in line 2 of the reverse, which is incomprehensible as it stands. The marked difference in height and spacing between the first three letters and the last three suggests that they should be read as two separate units. The first two letters of the line, ΔΩ, are identical to the abbreviation of the ethnicon which appears on some of the coins of Dor,¹⁷ the ethnicon in the genitive being ΔΩΠΙΤΩΝ/ΔΩΠΕΙΤΩΝ.¹⁸ While the coins attributed to Dor contain only a Greek abbreviation of the ethnicon, there are coins from other Phoenician settlements, such as Gabala and Zimyra, which have the ethnicon in both Greek and Phoenician abbreviations.¹⁹ Turning to sling bullets, we find that when the ethnicon does appear it is generally abbreviated rather than inscribed in full. Thus we find the abbreviations Β and ΒΟΙ for Βοιωτῶν, Κ and ΚΝΩ for Κνωσίων and ΟΛΥ for Ὀλυνθίων.²⁰ Our sling bullet seems to be the first instance of a bullet having an abbreviated ethnicon in two languages, i.e. Greek and Phoenician.

The letter *pi* immediately follows the abbreviated ethnicon ΔΩ and, as noted above, should clearly be grouped with it, for it is of exactly the same size. In our opinion the *pi* is an abbreviation of πόλις, or to be more exact, of the genitive form πόλεως.²¹ This is

¹⁴ See the references collected by E. Schürer: *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. G. Vermes and F. Millar, II, Edinburgh, 1979, pp. 118–119.

¹⁵ For דאר, see Josh. 17:11; 1 Kings 4:11; G.A. Cooke: *A Text-Book of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1903, No. 5, line 19; N. Avigad: *The Priest of Dor*, *IEJ* 25 (1975), pp. 101–105. For דור, see Josh. 11:2; Judg. 1:27; 1 Chron. 7:29.

¹⁶ See H. Seyrig: *Monnaies hellénistiques*, *RN* 6 sér. 6 (1964), pp. 14–15.

¹⁷ *BMC Phoenicia*, pp. lxxv, 113–114, Nos. 1, 2, 11; M. Rosenberger: *City-Coins of Palestine*, II, Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 31–32, 34, Nos. 2, 6, 21.

¹⁸ E.g. *BMC Phoenicia*, pp. 113–114, Nos. 3, 5, 8, 12–15; Rosenberger (above, n. 17), pp. 32–33, Nos. 9, 11, 13, 16.

¹⁹ Seyrig (above, n. 16).

²⁰ Many examples are to be found in the standard bibliography on Greek sling bullets; see W. Vischer: *Antike Schleudergeschosse in Kleine Schriften*, II, Leipzig, 1878, pp. 260–262, Nos. 25–29; G. Fougères in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio: *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, s.v. *glans*, p. 1610; Robinson (above, n. 2), p. 429, n. 179, pp. 430–431, Nos. 2220–2227, p. 437, Nos. 2260–2264; C. Foss: *Greek Sling Bullets in Oxford, Archaeological Reports for 1974–75*, pp. 40–42, Nos. 2, 12, 13; Empereur (above, n. 2), p. 557, No. 7; M.-C. Hellmann: *Collection Froehner: balles des frondes grecques*, *BCH* 106 (1982), pp. 81–82, Nos. 23, 30. For ethnicons inscribed in full on sling bullets, see Robinson (above, n. 2), pp. 423–424, Nos. 2181–2183, p. 429, n. 179, p. 437, n. 201.

²¹ For another example see H. Grégoire: *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d'Asie Mineure*, I, Paris, 1922, No. 309 *ter*; see also U. Wilcken, *PWRE* II A 2 (1923), col. 2303 (bottom). Normally the *polis* precedes the ethnicon, as in ἡ πόλις τῶν Ἀθηναίων. However, the reverse also occurs; see Grégoire (above); *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, 47, lines 5–6, 49, line 11; *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, 821.

another unusual feature of the sling bullet from Dor, for generally the issuing body mentioned is the resident people rather than their civic organization as a whole, e.g. *polis*, league, etc.

Our study so far shows that the sling bullet found at Dor was made under that city's authority and bore an acclamation for the success of a man called Tryphon. In view of the fact that Dor served as a stronghold of Diodotus-Tryphon in the war against Antiochus VII,²² the link between the sling bullet and Diodotus-Tryphon seems assured.

Returning to line 1 (reverse), we can see a bird flying to the left. The bird is flanked by the year sign L on the left and by a lunate *epsilon* on the right. Birds, especially eagles, are a common motif on sling bullets and probably symbolize their piercing power.²³ Far more important is the date appearing in this line. Obviously the year sign taken together with the *epsilon* indicate the date year 5. A decoration between the year sign and the actual number, such as we have here, is found on various coins.²⁴ The date can be either year 5 of an unknown era of Dor or the fifth year of Tryphon's rule. I can find no evidence to support the first possibility and hence it seems more likely that the fifth year of Tryphon's reign is indicated. In fact, this sling bullet is analogous in many ways to the Phoenician series of the coins of Tryphon. On these coins we find, on the reverse, a decoration (generally an eagle), an abbreviation of the ethnicon and a date which undoubtedly refers to Tryphon's regnal years.²⁵ The parallels with our sling bullet are obvious. The obverse of these Phoenician coins always has a portrait of Tryphon. The portrait is intended to express the issuing body's recognition of and loyalty to its ruler. On the obverse of our sling bullet we have the phrase Τρύφωνο(ς) νίκη, which seems to serve the same function as the portrait on the coins. On this basis the date on the sling bullet is the fifth year of Tryphon.

This is the first indication that Tryphon's rule lasted more than four years and thus it is worth while to take a more detailed look at the chronology generally assigned to Tryphon. Josephus speaks of a reign of only three years, but his statement is contradicted by some of Tryphon's coins dated year 4.²⁶ Thus a fifth year of his reign is certainly possible.

Tryphon's reign began only after he had murdered his ward Antiochus VI.²⁷ The last

²² See above, p. 153 with n. 4.

²³ Vischer (above, n. 20), II, p. 262, No. 32; Empereur (above, n. 2), p. 556, No. 2; Hellmann (above, n. 20), p. 85, No. 44, pp. 86–87.

²⁴ See G. Le Rider and H. Seyrig: Objets de la collection Louis De Clercq, *RN* 6 sér. 10 (1968), pp. 18–19, 21, Nos. 340–341, 345–346, 362–364.

²⁵ Conveniently assembled by H. Seyrig: Notes on Syrian Coins, *NNM* 119 (1950), p. 23, Nos. 30–40; henceforth this paper will be referred to as Seyrig, *Notes*. It should be noted that Seyrig, pp. 10–11, assigned types Nos. 34–38 to the mint of Ptolemais. Later on, however, he attributed these coins to the mint of Ascalon; see G. Le Rider and H. Seyrig: Objets de la collection Louis De Clercq, *RN* 6 sér. 9 (1967), pp. 35–36.

²⁶ *Ant.* 13.224. For the coins, see E. Babelon: *Les rois de Syrie, d'Arménie et de Commagène*, Paris, 1890, Nos. 1057–1059; *BMC Seleucid Kings*, p. 69, No. 16; Seyrig, *Notes*, p. 3, Nos. 21–33.

²⁷ For a collection of the ancient sources and a brief discussion, see T. Fischer: Zu Tryphon, *Chiron* 2 (1972), pp. 206–208.

coins of Antiochus VI are dated to the year 171 of the Seleucid era (October 142–October 141 B.C.E.; henceforth the Seleucid era will be abbreviated S.E.).²⁸ Thus the earliest date for Tryphon's reign would be 142–141 B.C.E.²⁹ However, the dating of the death of Antiochus VI (and hence the beginning of Tryphon's reign) is a more complex question, for the literary sources do not confirm the numismatic evidence.

To begin with 1 Maccabees, we find the following sequence of events: Antiochus VI is murdered by Tryphon (13:31–32); the Jews achieve independence in 170 S.E. and that year is to be reckoned as the first year of Simon the Hasmonean as High Priest (13:41–42). Thus Antiochus VI would have been murdered no later than the last month of 170 S.E. This can be reconciled with the numismatic evidence only if the year 170 S.E. was calculated in 1 Maccabees according to the Babylonian system, i.e. the year begins in the spring of 142 and ends in the spring of 141 B.C.E. In that case there is an overlap of six months between Antiochus VI's last coins and the date given in 1 Maccabees.³⁰

Nonetheless several other sources, including Josephus and Diodorus Siculus, present a more difficult problem. They state that the assassination of Antiochus VI occurred only after Demetrius II had been captured by the Parthians.³¹ Demetrius II seems to have been taken prisoner in 173 S.E. (140–139 B.C.E.)³² and hence, according to these sources, Tryphon could have murdered the boy king and initiated his reign only in 173 S.E. or later.

The chronology of events given by Josephus and the other sources raises several difficulties. No coins dating from the supposed last two years of Antiochus VI's reign have been unearthed so far and Josephus himself assigns to the boy king a reign of only four years rather than six or seven.³³ More important for our purposes is the fact that, according to this sequence of events, both Antiochus VII and Tryphon were issuing coins at Antioch at the same time.³⁴

²⁸ For the coin evidence, see S. Ben-Dor: Some New Seleucid Coins, *PEQ* (1946–1947), p. 44, No. 2 = A.B. Brett: Seleucid Coins of Ake-Ptolemais in Phoenicia: Seleucus IV to Tryphon, *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 1 (1945), p. 28, No. 21A; G. Le Rider: *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes*, Paris, 1965, p. 370, n. 2.

²⁹ Ben-Dor (above, n. 28), pp. 46–47; Seyrig, *Notes*, p. 13. See now Tryphon's coin of year 1; A. Houghton: *Coins of the Seleucid Empire from the Collection of Arthur Houghton* (Ancient Coins in North American Collections 4), New York, 1983, No. 816. I owe this reference to Shraga Qedar.

³⁰ See Fischer (above, n. 27), pp. 210–212.

³¹ Josephus, *Ant.* 13. 186–187, 218–220; Diodorus Siculus, 33.28; Appian, *Syr.* 67–68; Orosius, *Adversus Paganos* 5.4. 17–18. Livy, *Epit.* 52 and 55, is not incompatible with this picture. Justin, 36.1. 1–10, is sometimes quoted as representing the same chronological sequence, but this is wrong. In fact, Justin may be used as evidence that Tryphon and Demetrius II ruled contemporaneously; see J.A. Goldstein: *I Maccabees* (Anchor Bible 41), New York, 1976, p. 468.

³² Seyrig, *Notes*, p. 14, n. 29; Le Rider (above, n. 28), pp. 369–371.

³³ *Ant.* 13, 218.

³⁴ Seyrig, *Notes*, pp. 12–17; Schürer (above, n. 14), I, 1973, pp. 130–131. H.R. Baldus: Der Helm des Tryphon und die seleukidische Chronologie der Jahre 146–138 v.Chr., *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 20 (1970), pp. 217–239, argues for a joint rule of Antiochus VI and Tryphon from 142/141 to 139/138 B.C.E., but this is to be rejected; see Fischer (above, n. 27), pp. 201–213.

The mistake in Josephus and the other sources probably stems from a Hellenistic source which first described the struggle between the Parthians and Demetrius II, a struggle which ended with the latter's capture, and then went on to describe the reign of Antiochus VI and the subsequent rule of his assassin Tryphon. In other words, the Hellenistic source presented the events according to regional rulers, rather than in strict chronological order.³⁵

Thus it seems preferable to take 142–141 B.C.E. as the starting point of Tryphon's reign. Tryphon's fifth year, which is first attested on our sling bullet, would then fall in 138–137 B.C.E. Up to now, for want of evidence, it has been assumed that Tryphon's coins dated year 4 and minted in 139–138 B.C.E. were his last. In that year (174 S.E.) Antiochus VII Sidetes arrived in Syria and began striking coins there.³⁶ The conclusion, then, was inevitable: Antiochus VII managed to overpower Tryphon in less than a year.³⁷ Our find that Tryphon's reign extended into a fifth calendar year sheds some new light on the ancient sources, namely Appian and Josephus.

Appian's statement that Antiochus VII succeeded in killing Tryphon only after great effort (σὺν πόνῳ πάλῳ) is now confirmed.³⁸ In addition, Josephus' description of Antiochus VII's campaign against Tryphon in Syria³⁹ is more readily intelligible now that we know that the campaign extended into another year. For, according to Josephus, after Antiochus VII landed in Syria in 174 S.E. he was not immediately accepted by the local population. Only after he had married his sister-in-law Cleopatra Thea was he recognized as a legitimate heir to the Seleucid throne. From the numismatic evidence we learn that it was at this stage, i.e. after his stay in Seleucia, that he set out to conquer Antioch, the capital city of the kingdom.⁴⁰ From Antioch the new king had to proceed southwards some 507 km. to Dor and he must have encountered some resistance on the way.⁴¹ This chain of events clearly required some

³⁵ M. Stern: *The Documents on the History of the Hasmonean Revolt*², Tel Aviv, 1972, p. 118 (Hebrew); Goldstein (above, n. 31), p. 468.

³⁶ 1 Macc. 15:10; Babelon (above, n. 26), Nos. 1060–1068; *BMC Seleucid Kings*, p. 70, No. 3, p. 73, Nos. 46, 49–51; E.T. Newell: *The Seleucid Coinages of Tyre*, *NNM* 73 (1936), pp. 31–33, Nos. 108–113, 146; *SNG Syria, Seleucid Kings*, Copenhagen, 1959, No. 330; D.B. Waagø: *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, IV, 2, Princeton, 1952, p. 17, No. 180.

³⁷ Seyrig, *Notes*, p. 14.

³⁸ *Syr.* 68.

³⁹ *Ant.* 13. 222–224.

⁴⁰ For Antiochus VII's stay in Seleucia during the first year of his reign, see E.T. Newell in C.B. Welles: *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, New Haven, 1934, p. 292, n. 3. Coins of Antiochus VII Sidetes were also minted in that year (174 S.E.) at Antioch — see *BMC Seleucid Kings*, p. 73, No. 50; Waagø (above, n. 36), p. 17, No. 180. As Antiochus VII was first received in Seleucia, it is obvious that nearby Antioch came under his control only later in the year. For Tryphon's rule in Antioch prior to the invasion of Antiochus Sidetes, see E.T. Newell: *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch*, New York, 1918, pp. 71–73; Seyrig, *Notes*, pp. 15–16, 22–23, Nos. 1–29; Waagø (above, n. 36), p. 16.

⁴¹ *Ant.* 13.223. It should be noted that both Orthosia and Ptolemais are on the route between Antioch and Dor and that these two cities remained loyal to Tryphon until the battle of Dor. For Orthosia, see 1 Macc. 15:37; Syncellus, *Chronographia*, ed. G. Dindorf, Bonn, 1829, pp. 552–553; Seyrig, *Notes*, pp. 6–7. For

time and the discovery that Tryphon's reign extended into a fifth year provides us with that time.⁴²

The question now arises as to whether Tryphon's reign extended beyond a fifth year. The sources which tell of his death give us different versions of its manner and place.⁴³ Although none of these sources mentions the exact time of Tryphon's death, the overall impression is that he died soon after his defeat at Dor. However, such an inference from the sources, even taken together with the absence of any evidence, numismatic or otherwise, for a sixth or seventh year is perhaps unjustified. In the past, this kind of argument has led to a false assumption about Tryphon, i.e. that his reign lasted only four years.⁴⁴

A more substantial indication that Tryphon's fifth year was his last may be gleaned from two Aradian coins. These coins bear the date of the 122nd year of the Aradian era, 138/137 B.C.E. (i.e. the date of Tryphon's fifth year), and they mark the beginning of a new series of autonomous tetradrachms minted by the people of Aradus after a lapse of 43 years.⁴⁵ Seyrig has convincingly connected the reappearance of the autonomous series with the struggle between Antiochus VII Sidetes and Tryphon. According to Seyrig, Antiochus VII granted this privilege to Aradus because he needed to secure a strong fleet which could be used against Tryphon's forces in Phoenicia (and against the Jewish state as well).⁴⁶ In our view, it is even more likely that Antiochus VII allowed the people of Aradus to mint coins only after Aradian ships and trained seamen had already helped him to defeat Tryphon, first at Dor and then elsewhere.⁴⁷ Thus the coins were struck as a result of Antiochus VII's gratitude for services rendered rather than in anticipation of future assistance, as Seyrig argues. The fact that the goddess Nike holding an *aplustre* is depicted on the reverse of these coins, while on the obverse one can see the city goddess, suggests that they were issued to commemorate the final victory over Tryphon. Hence Tryphon's fifth year was, in all likelihood, his last.

The date on the sling bullet, taken together with the abbreviation ΔΩΠ, i.e. Δω(ριτῶν) π(όλεως), shows that by 138/137 B.C.E. Dor was already a *polis*. Indeed,

Ptolemais, see Charax of Pergamon, *FGrHist* 103 F 29. Thus Antiochus must have had to detour around their territory.

⁴² I Maccabees barely mentions Antiochus VII's activities in Syria before the battle of Dor. This is because the author is interested in bringing the clash between the Seleucid king and Simon the Hasmonean to the foreground as quickly as possible.

⁴³ For Tryphon's flight, see I Macc. 15:37; Charax of Pergamon, *FGrHist* 103 F 29; Frontinus, *Strategemata* 2.13.2. Some sources say that he was killed: Josephus, *Ant.* 13.224; Appian, *Syr.* 68; John Antioch, *FHG* IV, p. 561 (fr. 65); but others claim that he committed suicide: Strabo, 14.5.2 (668); Syncellus, pp. 552–553 (Dindorf).

⁴⁴ For a reign of only four years, see above, p. 159.

⁴⁵ E.T. Newell: *Miscellanea Numismatica: Cyrene to India*, *NNM* 82 (1938), pp. 35–36, No. 15; Le Rider and Seyrig (above, n. 24), p. 12, No. 295; cf. Seyrig, *Notes*, pp. 17–18.

⁴⁶ Seyrig, *Notes*, pp. 18–19.

⁴⁷ For Antiochus VII's use of a navy at Dor, see I Macc. 15:14.

three writers of the period, Polybius, the author of 1 Maccabees and Apollodorus of Athens, refer to Dor as a *polis*.⁴⁸

We now return to the final portion of the inscription. The remainder of line 2 — the word *ποῦ* — is in larger and more widely spaced letters than the first part of the line and is linked with the word *γεῦσαι* of line 3. This taunting imperative, *ποῦ γεῦσαι*, 'have a taste of sumac', is addressed to the enemy and refers, of course, to the sling bullet itself. Other sling bullets bearing an inscription meant for the enemy have been found, so that we find such commands as *δέξαι*, *λάβε*, *κράτε*, in which the enemy is requested, as it were, to seize or receive the sling bullet hurled at him.⁴⁹

Our sling bullet uses a more elaborate image, for the bullet itself is termed *rhús* and the enemy is told to taste it. *Rhús*, also known as sumac, is a genus of shrubs and small trees with clusters of flowers at the end of the branches and small hairy one-seeded fruits. One species, *Rhús coriaria*, is often mentioned by Greek and Latin writers. They tell us that the sumac was used for tanning and that its fruit was used both as a spice and for medical purposes.⁵⁰ Pliny tells us that this type of sumac grew in Syria and this is no doubt why the ancients called it Syrian *rhús* (*rhús Syriacus*, *ῥοῦς Συριακῆς*).⁵¹ The sumac is also mentioned in the Mishnah and other Jewish sources.⁵² In addition to this general evidence that the *rhús* grew in Syria and Palestine, we have some indication that *rhús* was actually found in the vicinity of Dor, for less than 20 km. to the north-east of Dor, on Mount Carmel, we know of a place named Kh. Summaqa. This name undoubtedly preserves the Syriac *סומכא*, which is no other than a synonym of *rhús*. It was from the Syriac, if only indirectly, that the word sumac was absorbed into several modern languages.⁵³ Thus the people of Dor were probably no strangers to the sumac and its uses.

The question still remains as to why our sling bullet orders the enemy to have a taste of sumac, or to be more precise, a taste of its fruit.⁵⁴ We have seen above that the sumac was used for three main purposes — for tanning, as a spice and in medical concoctions — and it is probably one of the two latter uses that is referred to here. In either cases the command can only be an ironic one. The sling bullet is intended to hurt the enemy, not to bring pleasure or relief from pain.

⁴⁸ Polybius, 5.66.1; 1 Macc. 15:14; Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. *Δῶρος* = *FGrHist* 244 F 19 and Jacoby's commentary, *ad loc.* See also E. Schwartz, *PWRE* I, 2 (1894), cols. 2856–2875.

⁴⁹ See Hellmann (above, n. 20), pp. 80–82, Nos. 18, 21, 26; p. 86; Guarducci (above, n. 12), II, p. 522.

⁵⁰ For the *rhús* in general, see Galen, *Medicorum Graecorum Opera*, XII, p. 922; Dioscorides, *de Materia Medica* (ed. M. Wellman), 1.108; Theophrastus, *Historia plantarum* 3.18.5; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 13.55; 24. 91–93. For tanning, see also Scribonius Largus, *Compositiones* 142; for use as a spice, see Largus, 111; Galen, XII, p. 353; for use in medicines, see Galen, XII, p. 922; Hippocrates, *Mul.* 1.31; 2.181; *Nat. Mul.* 32; Pliny, 24.129; Largus, 111.142, 256; Celsus, *de Medicina* 6.11.5.

⁵¹ Origin: Pliny, 13.55. Name: Pliny, 24.129; Celsus, 6.11.5; Largus, 111; Galen, XIX, p. 741.

⁵² *Ma'ašerot* 1.2; *Pe'ah* 1.5 etc. See also *Tos. Shebi'it* 5.7; *PT Shebi'it* 7.2 (37b); 9.6 (39a).

⁵³ For the site, see E. Graf von Mülinen: Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Karmels, *ZDPV* 31 (1908), pp. 158–160. For *סומכא*, see I. Löw: *Die Flora der Juden*, I, Vienna-Leipzig, 1928, pp. 200–202.

⁵⁴ The word *ποῦς* applies to the plant as well as to its fruit; see H.G. Liddell et al.: *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., Oxford, 1940, s.v.

It should be noted that a sling bullet bearing the inscription τρωγάλιον, a dried fruit or sweetmeat, has been found.⁵⁵ Here also the use seems ironic; Guarducci explains that the enemy is to swallow the sling bullet as if it were dried fruit.⁵⁶ In sum, the slightly puzzling phrase ροῦ γεῦσαι may be a combination of two separate traditions: one is the command addressed to the enemy that he take the sling bullet and the other is the ironic reference to the bullet as something good.

Before concluding this paper some remarks on the script appearing on our sling bullet are warranted. The most prominent feature of the letter forms is the lunate (or cursive) *epsilon* (reverse lines 1 and 3) which in Coele-Syria is usually associated with inscriptions no earlier than the first century B.C.E. Nonetheless, other cursive features also appear on our sling bullet: the horizontal bar of the *tau* (obverse line 1) extends only to the left of the vertical stroke, while the horizontal stroke of the *delta* (reverse line 2) is connected to the adjacent *omega* at the latter's left foot. These features show that the artisan from Dor was influenced by the cursive script which was used at times in the Greek world from the fourth century B.C.E. onwards.⁵⁷ One sample of such cursive writing in our area is an inscription from Gaza securely dated no later than 198 B.C.E. This inscription features lunate *epsilons*, *sigmas* and *omegas*.⁵⁸ In our inscription, however, the *sigma* and *omega* are non-cursive.

Although some of the letters (*alpha*, *delta*, *sigma* and *upsilon*) are awkward, their form is consistent with letter forms on inscriptions found in the area of Coele-Syria and dated to the second half of the second century B.C.E. The *alpha* has a broken cross bar, while the two extreme *hastae* of the *sigma* are parallel to each other. The *pi* is somewhat unusual in that the right vertical stroke is a shade longer than the left one. *Pi* with feet of equal length is already known in the area at the time of our inscription. In short, the form of the letters on our sling bullet does not differ much from the lettering used on inscriptions of the area in that period.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ IG, IV, 384.

⁵⁶ Guarducci (above, n. 12), II, p. 522. L. Robert's attempt to connect τρωγάλιον with the custom of sprinkling money on the crowds during festivities is less convincing: Inscriptions d'Athènes et de la Grèce Centrale, *Archaiologike Ephemeris* (1969), pp. 36–39.

⁵⁷ See A. Wilhelm: Das Heiligtum der Artemis zu Luso, *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien* 4 (1901), pp. 74–75; idem, Über die Zeit einiger attischer Fluchtafeln, *ibid.* 7 (1904), pp. 106–110. See also J. Bousquet: L'inscription sténographique de Delphes, *BCH* 80 (1956), p. 26, n. 2; J. Coupry: Apports d'Olbia de Provence à l'épigraphie grecque d'Occident, in *Acta of the Fifth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy, Cambridge 1967*, Oxford, 1971, p. 145, No. 11; C. Rapin: Les inscriptions économiques de la trésorerie hellénistique d'Ai Khanoum, *BCH* 107 (1983), pp. 315–371. Cf. Guarducci (above, n. 12), I, 1967, pp. 377–385; III, 1974, p. 320.

⁵⁸ *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, VIII, No. 269. For the date, see P. Roussel: Epitaphe de Gaza commémorant deux officiers de la garnison ptolémaïque, *Aegyptus* 13 (1933), p. 147 and for a photograph, see *QDAP* 1 (1932), Pl. LIX.

⁵⁹ For comparative material, see Y.H. Landau: A Greek Inscription from Acre, *IEJ* 11 (1961), pp. 118–126. See also *K'tovot Mesaprot (Inscriptions Reveal)* (Israel Museum Catalogue 100), Jerusalem, 1972, Nos. 224, 227 and Y.H. Landau: A Stamped Jar-Handle from Jaffa, *'Atiqot* (English Series) 2 (1959), pp. 186–187, n. 2.

The inscription on the sling bullet has thus been deciphered and should read as follows:

- obverse: Τρύφωνος
νίκη
- reverse: (ΓΑ)Τ L bird ē
Δω(ριτῶν) π(όλεως). 'Ροῦ
γεῦσαι.

It should be translated as follows:

- obverse: For the victory
of Tryphon.
- reverse: Dor. Year 5.
Of the city of the Dorians. Have
a taste of sumac.

Postscript. After this paper was submitted for publication, Schlesinger published a brief note on five sling bullets from a private collection which were said to have been found at Crocodilopolis,⁶⁰ some 8 km. to the south of Dor. One of these sling bullets has the imperative ΓΕΥΣΑΙ inscribed on its reverse. This confirms our reading of Tryphon's sling bullet and is an even closer parallel to the other imperatives discussed above (p. 161).

⁶⁰ D. Schlesinger: More on Slingstones, *Qadmoniot* 17 (1984), p. 89 (Hebrew).



A: Obverse of sling bullet.



B: Reverse of sling bullet, upper part.



C: Reverse of sling bullet, lower part.

TRYPHON'S SLING BULLET FROM DOR



D: Tool No. 1.



E: Tool No. 2.



F: Impressions made by the tools.

TWO BRONZE ROULETTE TOOLS