

## II. DISCUȚII ȘI NOTE

### *Persian darics from the Athens 1929 hoard (IGCH 32) in the numismatic collection of the Romanian Academy*

Emanuel PETAC\*

The presence of the Persian darics in the Greek world and in the entire area of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, especially during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, represents a well-known reality. A lot of hoards from this period were discovered during the last 100 years<sup>1</sup>. One of the most important was found in 1929 at Athens, containing several hundreds of darics, most of them disappearing in the commerce. Only eight coins are kept today in the Numismatic Museum from Athens, three in the collection of the American Numismatic Society in New York, together with 34 casts<sup>2</sup>, another daric in the Museum of Fine Arts



Fig. 1. 1 – Darics from the Athens 1929 hoard: 1-2 – collection of the Romanian Academy; 3 – collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

\* Senior researcher to the Numismatic Department from the Library of the Romanian Academy; e-mail: viorel.petac@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup>I. Carradice, *The "Regal" Coinage of the Persian Empire*, in I. Carradice (ed.), *Coinage and administration in the*

*Athenian and Persian Empire*, BAR International Series 343, 1987, pp. 79, 87.

<sup>2</sup>IGCH 32; Hélène Nicolet-Pierre, *Or Perse en Grèce : deux trésors de dariques conservés à Athènes*, in *Karakter : aphaeroma ste Manto Oikonomidou*, Athens, 1996, p. 202.

collection from Boston<sup>3</sup>. In the numismatic collection of the Romanian Academy there are also two darics coming from the great hoard discovered at Athens in 1929. They were bought in early 1930 from A. Papazian (Bucharest)<sup>4</sup>. There are between the first coins from the Athens 1929 hoard entering in a public collection. The daric from the Boston Museum (fig. 1.3) was bought in February 1930 from C.T. Seltman. Those kept in the Numismatic Museum from Athens were offered to the institution one year later, in 1931, by Penelope S. Delta.

#### Xerxes II to Artaxerxes II

Av. Persian king moving to right, in running-kneeling position, with quiver over his shoulder, holding transverse spear ending in a ball in his right hand and bow in his left.

Rv. Oblong incuse.

1. AV 8,33 g; 17×14 mm; inv. AV. A. 9 (143). Fig.1.1.

BMC Greek-*Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*, group E, p. 156, nos. 58-60.

Carradice, pl. XIV, no. 42, type III b, group C, years 420-375 BC.

Oct. Iliescu, *Arta iraniană în colecțiile din Republica Socialistă România*, Bucharest, 1971, p. 58, no. 174 b.

C. Preda, E. Petac, *Les monnaies d'or de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine, I. Monnaies grecques et romaines*, Wetteren, 2006, p. 63, no. 272.

#### Artaxerxes II to Artaxerxes III

Av. Persian king moving to right, in running-kneeling position, with quiver over his shoulder, holding transverse spear ending in a ball in his right hand and bow in his left.

Rv. Rectangular incuse punch.

2. AV 8,42 g; 17×14 mm; inv. AV. A. 10 (142). Fig. 1.2.

BMC Greek-*Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*, group K, p. 159, nos. 78-87.

Carradice, pl. XV, no. 51, type III b, late 5<sup>th</sup>?-mid 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Oct. Iliescu, *op. cit.*, p. 58, no. 174 b.

C. Preda, E. Petac, *op. cit.*, p. 63, no. 273.

Both of them belong to the III<sup>rd</sup> type of Carradice, group C and to the last series of the III<sup>rd</sup> type, from the last quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to the first part/mid 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>5</sup>. There are no common dies between these two coins and the eight darics from the same hoard kept in the Numismatic Museum from Athens. The reverse of the second Bucharest daric (no. 2, inv. AV. A. 10) is the same with that of the Boston Museum one, coming from the same hoard. We have no information until now concerning the coins from the American Numismatic Society. Anyway, all of them represent a small part of the original hoard – if the number of several hundreds of darics is real. The great number of the dies suggests indeed a large hoard, confirming the opinion of H. Nicolet-Pierre about the bigger variety of the coins from Athena 1929 hoard than the Elis 1918 one (IGCH 43). We have now – excepting the coins from the American Numismatic Society – 11 obverse dies and only eight reverses, the same condition saw in the Elis 1918 hoard, where we have 10 obverses and only four reverse dies<sup>6</sup>. The situation from the small lot coming from the Athens 1929 hoard could be the result of a deliberate selection of coins. A high degree of dispersion

<sup>3</sup> <http://educators.mfa.org/ancient/daric-kingdom-persia-running-kneeling-king-struck-under-darius-i-xerxes-i-2733>

<sup>4</sup> Numismatic Department of the Library from the

Romanian Academy, General repertory, years 1918-1962, p. 50, no. 267.

<sup>6</sup> Hélène Nicolet-Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 202-203.

as a specific feature of a hoard containing a large number of pieces suggests a different nature than the Elis 1918 hoard. It seems indeed that the Athens 1929 hoard is a commercial fund<sup>7</sup>, while the Elis 1918 hoard represents probably the money of a mercenary<sup>8</sup>. The opinion concerning the generally noticed bigger number of the reverse matrix toward the obverse dies apparently seems to be not specific for the Persian gold issues and “even for the Greek...who used the system not for the tetradrachms, but for the small denominations”<sup>9</sup>. That situation is not confirmed all around the West Pontic Greek cities, where we saw that the rare Lysimachus type staters from Mesembria were struck using four obverses and five reverses<sup>10</sup>; for the Istros Alexander type staters we have five obverse dies and seven reverse matrix<sup>11</sup>, while the Odessos Lysimachus type gold coins were struck with nine obverse dies but 12 reverse punches<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 207.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*; E. Petac, G. Talmațchi, V. Ioniță, *Le trésor des monnaies Perses d’or trouvé à Argamum/Organé (Jurilovca, dép. de Tulcea, Roumanie)*, in *Proceedings of the XIV<sup>th</sup> International Numismatic Congress Glasgow 2009*, I, Glasgow, 2011, p. 333.

<sup>9</sup> Hélène Nicolet-Pierre, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>10</sup> E. Petac, *From the types of Alexander to Lysimachus: the chronology of some Mesembrian and other West Pontic staters*, *AJN*<sup>2</sup>, 23, 2011, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> A. Vilcu, E. Petac, *The Second Syrian War and gold staters of Alexander type struck at Istros*, *AJN*<sup>2</sup>, 24, 2012, p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> E. Petac, A. Vilcu, *The Lysimachus type gold mintage from Odessos, Istros*, 19, 2013, p. 313.

