

# NOTAE NUMISMATICAE

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# ZAPISKI NUMIZMATYCZNE



Tom XVI

MUZEUM NARODOWE W KRAKOWIE  
SEKCJA NUMIZMATYCZNA  
KOMISJI ARCHEOLOGICZNEJ PAN  
ODDZIAŁ W KRAKOWIE

Kraków 2021

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## The Sabakes' "Owl" from the Collection of the District Museum in Toruń and Some Notes on the Coinage of the Penultimate Achaemenid Satrap of Egypt<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** There is an imitation of Athenian "owl" struck in the name of Sabakes, the penultimate Achaemenid satrap of Egypt, preserved in the District Museum in Toruń. The piece found its way to the museum together with the coin collection of Walery C. Amrogowicz (1863–1931). It was Professor Mariusz Mielczarek, who originally recognized and published the item. The aim of this article is to publish some new information about the piece. First of all, it has been established that the coin came from the former collection of Jean P. Lambros (1843–1909), a well-known dealer in antiquities from Athens, and had originally been found in Egypt. Some remarks concerning the minting activity of Sabakes are also presented. The iconography, purpose and output of the satrap's silver and bronze coins are analyzed.

**KEY WORDS:** Sabakes, "owl", satrap, Egypt, minting

**ABSTRAKT:** „Sówka” Sabakesa ze zbiorów Muzeum Okręgowego w Toruniu i kilka uwag na temat mennictwa przedostatniego achemenidzkiego satrapy Egiptu  
W Muzeum Okręgowym w Toruniu znajduje się imitacja ateńskiej „sówki” wybita w imieniu Sabakesa, przedostatniego achemenidzkiego satrapy Egiptu.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my deepest thanks to Peter van Alfen for his valuable comments on the draft of the present article, as well as for permission to illustrate some coins from the American Numismatic Society collection. I thank also Barbara Zajac for discussing some issues. All errors and omissions remain my own. Finally, I warmly thank Aleksandra Mierzejewska, the director of the District Toruń Museum, for granting permission to use the photograph of the Toruń piece which is the subject of the present study.

Egzemplarz ten trafił do muzeum wraz z kolekcją monet Walerego C. Amrogowicza (1863–1931). Autorem pierwszego opracowania i pierwszej publikacji monety jest prof. Mariusz Mielczarek. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia nowe spostrzeżenia na temat tej tetradrachmy. Przede wszystkim ustalono, że moneta pochodziła z dawnej kolekcji Jeana P. Lambrosa (1843–1909), znanego antykwariusza z Aten, a pierwotnie została znaleziona w Egipcie. Przedstawiono również uwagi dotyczące aktywności menniczej Sabakesa. Analizie poddano ikonografię i przeznaczenie oraz wielkość produkcji srebrnych i brązowych monet satrapy.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Sabakes, „sówka”, satrapa, Egipt, mennictwo

In 2000 professor Mariusz Mielczarek published an imitation of an Athenian “owl” struck in the name of Sabakes, the satrap of Egypt, and preserved in the District Museum in Toruń.<sup>2</sup> In his brilliant study he described the item perfectly and exhaustingly depicted its historical and cultural background. There is no need to repeat here the information in detail. It is enough to recall that the coin found its way to the District Museum in Toruń with the collection formed by Walery C. Amrogowicz (1863–1931), a citizen of Sopot and eminent collector of coins and other antiquities.<sup>3</sup> The numismatic collection was donated by Amrogowicz to the Toruń Society of Learning, and then deposited in the museum. It is also worth noting that this is the only exemplar of this type of “owl” imitation in Polish public collections. Professor Mielczarek’s publication is of a high scientific level and is based on the fundamental work of H. Nicolet-Pierre.<sup>4</sup> One should, however, stress that during the last twenty years the research on Athenian “owls” imitations, including coins struck in Egypt, strongly pulled forward. In the case of Egyptian “owls”, the research conducted by P. van Alfen is especially important.<sup>5</sup> In the present note, dedicated to mark Mielczarek’s Jubilee, I will make some short, complementary comments to his findings.

Sabakes, also known as Satakes or Tasiakes, was the penultimate Achaemenid satrap of Egypt, appointed on the satrapal chair, sometime after Artaxerxes III’s reconquest of the country.<sup>6</sup> His activity is usually dated to c. 338–333 BC. Confronting

<sup>2</sup> MIELCZAREK 2000; cf. also IDEM 1998: 11f, Fig. 6; The coin (Inv. No. D-139) had been published earlier in 1985 by A. Krzyżanowska but as an unidentified Arabian imitation of Athenian “owl”, not recognized as a Sabakes’ issue (cf. KRZYŻANOWSKA 1985: 30, no. 133; cf. MIELCZAREK 2000: 413, note 3); see also BIEDROŃSKA-SŁOTA, MALARCZYK and MEKARSKA 2009; BODZEK and ROMANOWSKI 2017: Fig. on page 34–35.

<sup>3</sup> MUSIAŁOWSKI 2004; cf. KRZYŻANOWSKA 1985: 3; MIELCZAREK 2000: 413.

<sup>4</sup> NICOLET-PIERRE 1979; cf. IDEM 2008: 13.

<sup>5</sup> VAN ALFEN 2002; cf. also IDEM 2001; IDEM 2011: 71ff.

<sup>6</sup> JUSTI 1895: 268f; BERVE 1926: II. 348, no. 689; NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 221f; VAN ALFEN 2001: 29f; HECKEL 2006: 246. Cf. also BRESCIANI 1998. On the situation in Egypt after the reconquest by Artaxerxes III see BRIANT 2002: 717f.

the Macedonian invasion of the territory of Darius III, he moved his troops to fight Alexander the Great and met his death at Issos in 333 BC (Arrian 2.11.8; DS 17.34.5; Curtius 3.11.10; 4.1.28). Not much is known about his activity in Egypt, but we do have his quite prolific coinage.<sup>7</sup> The latter mostly consists of Attic type tetradrachms but also include fractional silver and aes denominations. The thorough studies by Nicolet-Pierre (HNP) and van Alfen (PvA) established the die links pattern of the tetradrachm issues and the typology of the whole Sabakes coinage.

An alternative die link chain was recently proposed by A. Wojciechowska.<sup>8</sup> She merged the tetradrachms and other silver and AE issues of Artaxerxes III, Sabakes and Mazakes in one sequence of die numbers, an interesting yet not entirely convincing proposal. Additionally, Wojciechowska proposed a new die sequence of Sabakes' tetradrachm issues, which differs much in comparison to the HNP and PvA pattern. In particular, the order of dies has been completely changed and the identification and numbering of some dies have also been altered. Unfortunately, the author has not yet posted any comments explaining the reasons for the changes mentioned. All in all, whilst intriguing, the new proposal seems unconvincing and the arrangements of HNP and PvA are more persuasive. An undoubted achievement of Wojciechowska's is that she presents new exemplars of Sabakes tetradrachms in her publication that are lacking in the older works.

### SABAKES TETRADRACHMS

The common feature of all Sabakes' "owls" is a legend SWYK and the so-called "Sabakes symbol" placed on the reverse. The legend, which replaced the traditional AΘH inscribed on original Attic issues and many imitations, was rightly deciphered as Sabakes name.<sup>9</sup> Based on the diversity of the legends, first of all the presence or not of additional characters, Nicolet-Pierre separated two series of the satrap's tetradrachms. A similar pattern was worked out by van Alfen, but he replaced the series with types and distinguished 3 of them. The specimens belonging to HNP series 1 have a simple Aramaic legend SWYK. Van Alfen divided this group into two types according to the difference of the final letter of the inscription. The PvA type 1 probably has the Aramaic *nun*, while type 2 certainly bears the character

<sup>7</sup> For the most complete overview of Sabakes' coinage: NICOLET-PIERRE 1979; VAN ALFEN 2002 and WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019; cf. also ALRAM 1986: nos. 371–375; HARRISON 1982: 384ff, 498f; VAN ALFEN 2001: 29ff.

<sup>8</sup> WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019: 247ff.

<sup>9</sup> The identification of the legend as the name of Sabakes was made by J.P. Six (1888), who, however, later withdrew from this interpretation (1895). E.T. Newell (1938), H. Nicolet-Pierre (1979) and P. van Alfen (2001; 2002) again argued for the interpretation of the legend as the name of the satrap of Egypt. They were followed by Mielczarek (2000) and Wojciechowska (2019). On other possibilities see BABELON 1893a: 101; IDEM 1893b: 1x; IDEM 1910: 677f; SIX 1895; LIPÍŃSKI 1982; cf. also PRICE 1990: 40.

*kaph*. The difference had been already observed by Nicolett-Pierre, but she correctly treated it as insignificant.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the distinction between PvA types 1 and 2 is somewhat artificial and not fully convincing. According to van Alfen himself, the difference in the shape of the letters is more an effect of the preferences of engravers than an intended differentiation of types.<sup>11</sup> It seems that this observation is very close to the truth. One should add, that there is an obverse die link between the two variations, so the “owls” of both types were probably struck interchangeably or subsequently.<sup>12</sup> The final argument is that both forms were used alternately in the case of HNP 2 series / PvA 3rd type.<sup>13</sup> In this case, however, the pattern is more complex because both letter forms appear respectively on dies no. R18 and R23 (*nun*) and R20 and R21 (*kaph*). Additionally, there are also some variations in cases of the other characters of the HNP series 2 / PvA type 3. All of this was probably the reason why van Alfen chose not to divide his type 3 according to the presence of the two letter forms. Therefore, I prefer to follow here closer Nicolett-Pierre’s idea and to speak about just two variations of HNP series 1, rather than agreeing with separating two distinct types. The HNP series 2 = PvA type 3 is distinguished by the presence of an additional inscription to the l. of the owl.<sup>14</sup> This part of the legend has slightly differentiated forms and is not convincingly explained in terms of different explanations of its meaning i.e. the name of minting place, another personal name, Sabakes’ title or the value of the coin remain unsatisfactory.<sup>15</sup> There are also some minor differences like letter size etc. As mentioned above, a common feature of both the HNP series and all three PvA types is the presence of the so-called “Sabakes sign” i.e. a crescent and thunderbolt (?) placed on the right side of the owl, near the legend SWYK.

Type	HNP series	Type PvA	Type Wojciechowska	Number of obverse / reverse dies
1a ( <i>nun</i> type)	1	1	1	10 (1 obverse die shared with variation 1b) / 15
1b ( <i>kaph</i> type)	1	2	2	3 (1 obverse die shared with variation 1a) / 4
2	2	3	3	1 / 10

<sup>10</sup> NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 225. She labeled the different forms “angular” and “rounded”, respectively.

<sup>11</sup> VAN ALFEN 2002: 28.

<sup>12</sup> In fact, rather subsequently. The obverse die no. 8 is used with the reverse dies of both variations, and the sequence is that it starts with reverse dies nos. 10–13 (*nun* character) and then follows with reverse dies 14–15 (*kaph* character).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 226.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019: 253ff, nos. 55–75.

<sup>15</sup> The propositions are summed up by Nicolett-Pierre (1979: 227).

<sup>16</sup> The number of dies according to PvA, with the addition of the present author.

## THE TORUŃ EXEMPLAR

The Toruń piece belongs to the HNP series 1, i.e. to the group with the *nun* or "angular" form character (PvA type 1, Wojciechowska type 1, or mine Type 1, variation a). Mielczarek rightly detected that it was struck with dies D8/R11 (HNP die study), according to him the same as Nicolet-Pierre's no. 11b (= PvA no. 13b = Wojciechowska no. 39).<sup>17</sup> However, he missed the fact that Nicolet-Pierre's specimen 11b is actually precisely the same piece as the one from the Amrogowicz collection. This is clearly shown by the comparison of photographs of both coins. Quite simply, the identical shape and blemishes of the flan do not lie. Moreover, the Toruń and HNP 11b pieces have an identical countermark on the reverse, located in exactly the same place, below the owl's head, partly on the wing, partly on the bird's body. The countermark, no. 34 according to the van Alfen classification, was missed in Mielczarek's description of the Toruń piece. The weight of both pieces is also almost identical – 15.55 in case of HNP no. 11b and 15.56 g in case of Toruń specimen. All in all, there is no doubt we are dealing with one and the same coin.

This has interesting implications for the history of the coin from Amrogowicz's collection. Piece no. 11b was identified by Nicolet-Pierre in Jacob Hirsch's auction catalogue of 1910.<sup>18</sup> It was an auction of Greek coins belonging to the late Jean P. Lambros (1843–1909). The latter, following in the footsteps of his father Pavlos, had been a leading dealer of antiquities in Athens in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> Lambros died in 1909 and after that his collection of Greek coins was sold by Hirsch in the following year and his antiquities in 1912 at Hotel Drouot.<sup>20</sup> As already mentioned, the discussed coin was included in the first catalogue under entry no. 461. It was described as an "asiatische Nachahmung" and dated c. 350–300 BC. What is interesting is that the legend consisting of *samek*, *waw*, *yod* and *kaph*, however with a question mark, did not let the author of the catalogue attribute the tetradrachm to Sabakes. Even more interesting information is contained in the further part of the catalogue description. The coin had been found in Egypt ("aus Aegypten"). The very same piece appeared a following year at Jacques (Jacob) Schulman's auction.<sup>21</sup> However, in this case the information about the provenance of the Egyptian find was omitted, and the tetradrachm itself was referred to as a "Chaldean" imitation, struck by a Persian satrap c. 350 BC. The

<sup>17</sup> MIELCZAREK 2000: 415: "H. Nicolet-Pierre pl. 25 no. 11b (same dies, i.e. D 8 and R 11)".

<sup>18</sup> HIRSCH 1910: no. 461.

<sup>19</sup> On J.P. Lambros see ANONYM 1910: 32–33; BATES 1910: 96; GALANAKIS 2011: 186, note 36; GALANAKIS and SKAL TSA 2012: 630. See also KRMNICEK and HARDT 2017: 14.

<sup>20</sup> HIRSCH 1910; LAIR-DUBREUIL 1912.

<sup>21</sup> J. Schulman, Auction 108, 27 November 1911, no. 743. Cf. WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019: 252, no. 39 – here, the wrong auction house name and auction date are given ("J. Aculman (27 Oct. 1911) lot 743").

provenance of the Toruń piece has remained unknown to date.<sup>22</sup> It is well known that Walery Amrogowicz purchased many of his coins at auctions and from dealers all over Europe.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes, information about the provenance was written on the envelopes in which the coins were kept in the Toruń District Museum, but not in the case of the Sabakes tetradrachm.<sup>24</sup> The identification of the Amrogowicz piece with the one in the 1910 Hirsch and 1911 Schulman catalogues allowed us to establish the provenance. However, it is still unclear whether the tetradrachm was bought by Amrogowicz directly at the Schulman auction in 1911 or from someone else later. Walery Amrogowicz started to collect coins during his school years, but his purchasing activity peaked in the years after 1919, and especially after 1923.<sup>25</sup> However, it does not exclude the possibility that he had purchased the Sabakes tetradrachm in 1911. Determining this requires further archival research. In any case, the coin currently stored in the Toruń District Museum was found in Egypt before 1909 and belonged to J.P. Lambros for some time.

The Toruń tetradrachm does not therefore increase the number of known Sabakes specimens. However, since Peter van Alfen's publication, a few new exemplars have appeared on the market and these were mostly collected by Wojciechowska.

HNP series 1 tetradrachms (PvA types 1–2) were, according to Nicolet-Pierre, struck with 10 obverse and 17 reverse dies. One more obverse and 2 more reverse dies were registered by van Alfen. Wojciechowska registered 11 obverse and 24 reverse dies. Based on material published after 2002, at least one obverse die should be added. In turn, in the case of the HNP series 2 / PvA type 3, 1 obverse and at least 10 reverse dies were used (HNP recognized 8 reverse dies, PvA two more). Wojciechowska added 2 more reverse dies to the set. In total, we have 13 obverse and c. 29/34 reverse dies (PvA and Wojciechowska respectively). Bearing in mind that the satrap held his position for 5 years, c. 2.5 dies were used per year. Assuming an average obverse die life of 20,000 coins, at least 260,000 tetradrachms were struck in the name of Sabakes in total.<sup>26</sup> This means c. 4.5 tons of silver or 170 Attic talents. The minimum time to strike 260,000 tetradrachms by a one-anvil team (working

<sup>22</sup> Cf. MIELCZAREK 2000: 414 and note 15.

<sup>23</sup> PETRYKOWSKI 1932: 6; MIELCZAREK, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> MIELCZAREK, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> PETRYKOWSKI 1932: 6; MIELCZAREK, *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> I follow the numbers adopted by L.W.H. Taylor (2017). In fact, the production might have been larger. I assumed here as a starting point the number of existing dies. There are, of course, methods of virtual reconstructing of the number of dies; cf. for example CARTER 1983; ESTY and CARTER 1991–1992; ESTY 1978; IDEM 1984; IDEM 1986; IDEM 2006; CALLATAÏ 1995. This may change the numerical values. Applying the Carter method (1983) one can receive the number of 14.87 dies for the issues of Sabakes tetradrachms (where  $n = 56$ ;  $d = 13$ ; and Carter's third formula was applied). This gives the number of 297,400 tetradrachms struck and generally 297.4 days (almost 10 months) needed for the minting process.

station) is c. 260 days i.e. approximately 8.5 months.<sup>27</sup> Of course, this time could have been shorter, if we assume more intensive minting. Moreover, taking a closer look at the Sabakes tetradrachms, one can modify the pattern slightly. Nicolet-Pierre correctly proposed to divide her series 1 (PvA types 1–2) and series 2 (PvA type 3) between two different workshops.<sup>28</sup> This idea sounds convincing, since there are no die links between both series and two workshops or two anvil-teams would explain this fact. The two series could have been struck partly in parallel, probably during the final weeks of Sabakes' preparations for his expedition against Alexander. The time needed to strike approximately 20,000 coins with one obverse die of series 3 could not have been longer than approximately 20 days, so the parallel minting would have lasted about 4 weeks. All in all, the general minting process might have been slightly shorter, but certainly took a few months.<sup>29</sup> Assuming 4 obols as the average daily wage for a mercenary, this sum allowed the recruitment of approx. 1000 soldiers a year or 2000 for six months.<sup>30</sup> The numbers may differ to some extent, because the wages might have been slightly lower (2 or 3 obols per day, for example) and part could have been paid in food etc. The intensity of the production of coins intended for financing military preparations would explain a certain fluctuation of the weights of the Sabakes tetradrachms, as indicated by van Alfen.<sup>31</sup>

### SABAKES' FRACTIONAL SILVER

The Sabakes silver fractional coinage follows the Sidonian prototype, with a "galley" and "the King fighting a lion" on the obverse and reverse respectively (PvA type 1).<sup>32</sup> The two known exemplars, listed already by Six, weight 0.70 and 0.41 g, i.e. they are probably 16<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>th</sup> shekel pieces.<sup>33</sup> This could connect them in one system with Athenian tetradrachms. As E. T. Newell observed, the Phoenician 16<sup>th</sup> shekel coin (a trihemiobol, according to him) corresponds closely in weight with the Attic obol (0.72 g) and therefore the Sabakes silver fractions match the Attic like weight standard of the tetradrachms issues.<sup>34</sup> Both specimens are not only

<sup>27</sup> I follow here again L. W. H. Taylor, who assumes that the daily production of a one anvil team was 1000 coins (TAYLOR 2017).

<sup>28</sup> NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 227.

<sup>29</sup> For example, L. Miltenberg (1998b: 28, note 123) assumed that minting took place between 335 and November 333 BC.

<sup>30</sup> On mercenary remunerations as *misthos*, *siteresion* = *sitarchia* and *ephodia* as well as amounts of pay, see TRUNDLE 1996: 163ff, especially 184ff; IDEM 2004: especially Chapter 3: "Paying Greek Mercenaries"; cf. also TRUNDLE 2017; MILLER 1984.

<sup>31</sup> VAN ALFEN 2002: 39; cf. WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019: 243.

<sup>32</sup> The fractional silver is omitted by Nicolet-Pierre.

<sup>33</sup> SIX 1895: 206, nos. 1–2; cf. WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019: 255, nos. 76–77.

<sup>34</sup> NEWELL 1938: 67. There is a discussion on the weight standard used in the case of the Sabakes "owls" in VAN ALFEN 2002: 36.

struck with different dies, but also differ as to the inscriptions and symbols. One, from the de Luynes collection, has the legend SWYK on the obverse, identifying it undoubtedly as a Sabakes issue, and a single letter *shin* and a rooster on the reverse.<sup>35</sup> The second bears no legend on the obverse and two characters, probably *samek* and *kaph* on the reverse.<sup>36</sup> The Sabakes' adoption of Phoenician types for silver fractional coinage is nothing unusual. Firstly, the Phoenician Sidonian fractional silver was circulating in Egypt in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, the very same type was struck by another mighty Achaemenid satrap, i.e. Mazaios during his leadership of Transeuphratene province. The latter coins, struck in Sidon, were of course designed for Phoenicia or Levant but Sabakes or his treasure staff were apparently aware of Mazaios' minting activity.<sup>38</sup> Both satrapies, i.e. Egypt and Transeuphratene were neighboring and the intensive and prolific minting activity of Mazaios in Cilicia and Transeuphratene was probably well known to the other officials in the west of the Achaemenid realm.

#### SABAKES' AES COINAGE

Two types of Sabakes' aes are known.<sup>39</sup> The first (HNP type a = PvA type 2) bears a lion and a star on the obverse and a standing Iranian archer on the reverse. Four specimens have been recognized to date.<sup>40</sup> Only two have a known weight – 1.18 g and 1.32 g respectively. The two registered diameters are 0.7 and 12 mm. Based on this, it is difficult to say something about the average weight and diameter of the type. The reverse inscription SWYK identifies them as belonging to Sabakes minting activity. Not too much can be said about the number of dies used for the issue, since of the two coins known from the photographs, only the one from the ANS collection is well preserved.

The tiarate head is depicted on the obverse of the second aes type (HNP type B = PvA type 3). The reverse bears a depiction of an Iranian archer, but this time kneeling, again accompanied by an inscription SWYK. We know of more exemplars of this type. To the specimens listed by Nicolet-Pierre and van Alfen one can add

<sup>35</sup> SIX 1895: 206, no. 1; cf. BABELON 1893b: 39, no. 275, Pl. VI, 16 (here as uncertain Mazaios).

<sup>36</sup> SIX 1895: 206, no. 1; cf. BABELON 1893b: 39, no. 276 (here as uncertain Mazaios).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. NEWELL 1938: 67 and note 138.

<sup>38</sup> On the Mazaios coinage at Sidon see ELAYI and ELAYI 2014; HILL 1910: nos. 78–86. The satrap also struck coins in Samaria, see MESHORER and QEDAR 1999: 25f, p. 97, no. 74, p. 99, no. 84, p. 102, no. 100. There are different types used in the latter case but the satrap's minting activity in the neighboring province was certainly known to the court of the satrap of Egypt. More generally on Mazaios' minting activity, see SIX 1884; BABELON 1893b: XLIIIff; MILDENBERG 1998a; cf. also CASABONNE 2004: 207ff.

<sup>39</sup> I follow the numbering and typology of Nicolet-Pierre and van Alfen here; cf. also HARRISON 1982: 499, series III–IV; ALRAM 1986: nos. 374–375; WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019: 255f, nos. 78–84.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 228, type A, Pl. 26, A; VAN ALFEN 2002: 31, nos. 1–4.

three more pieces tracked down on the market.<sup>41</sup> The weights span between 0.81 and 1.34 g. The diameter of the three new exemplars is between 10 and 11.7 mm. The average diameter is 10.9, i.e. 11 mm is the probable standard of the coin. Based on the photographs, one can assume that at least 3 obverse and 3 reverse dies were used to strike the second type and thus it was not an insignificant issue.

The fundamental question at hand concerns the relation between the two aes types. Were they struck simultaneously or subsequently? If simultaneously, do they represent two different denominations? The answers are difficult due to the small number of specimens and the lack of information on weight and diameter in some cases. However, I conservatively assume that both types were struck simultaneously and that, based on weights, the type 1 (HNP type a = PvA type 2) represents the greater denomination. Therefore, we can talk here about a unit (HNP type B = PvA type 3) and a double unit (HNP type a = PvA type 2).

H. Nicolet-Pierre and P. van Alfen both already noted the complex nature of the Sabakes coinages.<sup>42</sup> Especially important is the analysis of the latter scholar. The system, consisting of silver tetradrachms, silver and aes fractions, was undoubtedly a novelty in Egypt.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, van Alfen's observations concerning the local character of the Sabakes coinages are especially persuasive. I partially concur with Nicolet-Pierre's view that the coins struck by the satrap were not just a simple necessity issue. However, I also subscribe to the view that the most reasonable reason to strike the coins was to pay soldiers. They were probably at least partly mercenaries, needed to maintain peace and calm in the province.<sup>44</sup> Some issues, perhaps most of them, should be tied with Sabakes' preparations for the expedition against Alexander, which certainly lasted some months.<sup>45</sup>

One more observation should be made in the case of the Sabakes aes issues. Both silver denominations, i.e. tetradrachm and fractions, struck by the satrap imitate the well known locally and well settled economically types – the Athenian "owl" and the Sidonian 16<sup>th</sup> shekel piece. Therefore, such a choice of the Satrap of Egypt

<sup>41</sup> Cf. NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 228, type B, Pl. 26, B; VAN ALFEN 2002: 31, nos. 1–3; and 3 more: Baldwin Auctions Ltd. 34, 13.10.2003. Lot 632; CNG Electronic Auction 251, lot 179; V-Coins, Zuzim, 172. ([https://www.vcoins.com/en/stores/zuzim/172/product/sabakes\\_egypt\\_under\\_persia\\_ae\\_gvf\\_extremely\\_rare\\_see\\_notes\\_335\\_333\\_bce/939603/amp.aspx](https://www.vcoins.com/en/stores/zuzim/172/product/sabakes_egypt_under_persia_ae_gvf_extremely_rare_see_notes_335_333_bce/939603/amp.aspx); accessed on January 21, 2021).

<sup>42</sup> NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 229; VAN ALFEN 2002: 35f.

<sup>43</sup> I am not going to enter here the discussion concerning the inheritance of the system by Mazakes, a step already taken by van Alfen. I would merely restate my proposal to add a small silver fraction (0.34 g) to the corpus of Mazakes' Egyptian coinage; see below.

<sup>44</sup> The circumstances under which Sabakes became satrap in Egypt are unclear. It was probably a consequence of the native revolt already after the reconquest of Artaxerxes III (cf. BRIANT 2002: 717f). The satrap therefore needed military forces to maintain peace in the newly pacified province.

<sup>45</sup> Six (1888: 135), Newell (1938: 62–72), Price (1993) but also Nicolet-Pierre (2005: 13) rightly associated Sabakes' minting activity with the preparations for the war against Alexander. However, see some doubts raised by van Alfen (2011: 72).

was quite obvious and reasonable, because it met the expectations of the market, and thus of the recipients (mercenaries?). A different story seems to be the case of the aes. The obverse and reverse types were previously unknown in Egyptian minting. Moreover, they generally do not belong to the group of especially popular types, at least in such a comparison. There is also no economic reason to choose these and no other images. It seems, therefore, that we are dealing with a completely different reason for choosing the depictions in the case of Sabakes aes. In my view, Sabakes himself or his men responsible for minting, not being bound by economic determinants, thus had more freedom in choosing monetary images and reached for those which expressed and propagated the content important for the satrap. As already mentioned, the repetition of an Iranian archer depiction in the case of both Sabakes aes issues is quite significant. Obviously the archer as a coin-type was quite popular throughout the Achaemenid realm, including Phoenician and Palestinian regions.<sup>46</sup> However, this is true in the case of the so-called “Royal archer”. The issue of the use in the Achaemenid coinage, a motif of “Iranian archer drawing a bow” i.e. a character dressed in clothes resembling Iranian equestrian suit (i.e. so-called “Median” attire), is different. In fact, we only know of a few issues with such a depiction. For the standing archer type, the best analogy are small bronze coins probably minted in western Lycia in the name of the mysterious character L<sup>3</sup>RYYN.<sup>47</sup> The issuer was probably a lower-level Persian officer, and the issue was intended to finance military operations.<sup>48</sup> The depictions of the archer on the Sabakes (type A) and L<sup>3</sup>RYYN coins are almost identical in terms of attire and attitude. In both cases the archer wears a long-sleeved belted shirt, trousers and a kyrbasia. He is facing right, with his left leg slightly bent at the knee and he is drawing back his bow. The L<sup>3</sup>RYYN coins could be dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, thus close to the time of the minting activity of Sabakes.<sup>49</sup> In other words, the very type started to be used in Achaemenid coinages at approximately the same time, i.e. in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. No direct prototype could be indicated among other issues of the Achaemenid period. Considering the attitude of the archer, the closest analogy is the Royal archer on some silver staters struck by Mausolus.<sup>50</sup> Here, however, the

<sup>46</sup> Cf. BODZEK 2011a: 283ff; TUPLIN 2014: 150ff; cf. also CALMEYER 1979.

<sup>47</sup> See: MERZBACHER 1871: 428f; BABELON 1910: LXXXIII, Fig. 39; ALRAM 1986: Pl. II, 349; ASHTON 1999: no. 512, Pl. 19; DEBORD 1999: Pl. III, 18; OLBRYCHT 2004: Pl. 5.2.C; ASHTON 2006: Pl. 5, 56; BODZEK 2011a: Pl. IV, 13–13a; IDEM 2019: 29f.

<sup>48</sup> IDEM 2019: 30.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. ASHTON 1999: no. 512; IDEM 2006: 11f; LEMAIRE 2000: 129; BODZEK 2011a: 108f; OLBRYCHT 2004: 306; BODZEK 2019: 30; some other researchers have dated the coins attributed to Ariarathes to the Early Hellenistic period.

<sup>50</sup> IMHOOF-BLUMER 1905: no. 11, Pl. V, 17; BABELON 1910: Pl. XCI, 6; HURTER 1998: Pl. 32, 35; MILDENBERG 1998b: Pl. 61, 80; DEBORD 1999: 145, Pl. IV, 6; KONUK 2000: 175f, nos. 1–3, Pl. XXX, 2–4; IDEM 2002: nos. 1–3, Pl. 33: 2–3; OLBRYCHT 2004: Pl. 5.2; BODZEK 2011a: 199ff. The similarities between archer on Mausolus and L<sup>3</sup>RYYN coins had been already noticed by Imhof-Blumer (1905: 266).

headgear (the kitaris) and other elements of the attire are different. It is interesting that we can detect the closest analogy for the obverse of the Sabakes issue in western Asia Minor too. The prototype for the walking lion on the Sabakes coin was found in the Milesian coinage.<sup>51</sup> Certainly, the Milesian drachms might have born a similar depiction. However, as Nicolet-Pierre observed, we cannot find a walking lion as one of the types used by anyone apart from Mazaios on his Cilician issues.<sup>52</sup> The similarity between the lions with a star in the field is striking, especially in the case of the tiny obols with a lion depicted walking right.<sup>53</sup> I have already noticed a possibility of inspiration for Sabakes silver fractions by types minted on behalf of Mazaios. Perhaps the inspiration was even more complex and its causes more profound. It might have been the case that Sabakes followed his mighty colleague in his choice of some coin types.

The attitude of the archer depicted on reverses of type 2 (HNP type B = PvA type 3) is different. He is drawing back his bow as well but in a kneeling pose. His attire is quite the same as his counterparts on the type 1: a long sleeved belted shirt, trousers and a kyrbasia. In this case, it is again difficult to find an analogy for the type among the Achaemenid coinages. Again, the general prototypes were depictions of the royal archer type II on both royal coins as well as issues inspired by the royal ones. The closest analogy for the Sabakes archer is a depiction of an archer on a unique (?), bronze coin, which is known solely from the market.<sup>54</sup> The archer depiction is placed on the obverse type of the issue, while there is an Iranian horseman brandishing a spear on the reverse. Both characters wear kyrbasia, sarapis and anaxirides, i.e. classic Iranian horseman attire. As mentioned earlier, the coin is unfortunately anonymous.<sup>55</sup> In general it repeats the iconographic scheme of the well-known "Great King/Iranian horseman" issue but the royal archer (type II) is replaced by a kneeling Iranian archer, i.e. wearing "Median" attire. The similarity between the two coin types, especially that to aes forming a part of the "Great King/Iranian Horseman" issue prompted the auctioneer to attribute the discussed unique bronze to the latter.<sup>56</sup> Such an attribution is, however, wrong because of the differences in attire and attitude in the case of the "Median" (Iranian) archer.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. BABELON 1910: 635.

<sup>52</sup> NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 228; cf. VAN ALFEN 2002: 28. The latter scholar saw similarities to the later Babylon lion issues. On the Cilician Lion issues of Mazaios cf. BABELON 1910: 472ff, nos. 743–749; NEWELL 1919: 18ff, nos. 5–18 (here as minted in Myriandros); MILDENBERG 1998a: 46ff, Pl. XVII, 11–12; Pl. XVIII, 13.

<sup>53</sup> NEWELL 1919: 18, no. 16; BABELON 1910: 473, no. 745, Pl. CXIV, 17; cf. CASABONNE 2004: 214, Series 5, group C; SNG LEVANTE 191 (as Myriandros), SNG FRANCE no. 435 (Myriandros).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. [www.ancientimports.com](http://www.ancientimports.com) (accessed 12.11.2010). In this case, the coin is wrongly attributed to the "Great King/Iranian horseman" type. This is a tiny bronze – 1,34 g; 12.01 mm. Cf. BODZEK 2011a: 203f, 251, Pl. IX, 14–14b.

<sup>55</sup> At least no legend is detectable in the photograph.

<sup>56</sup> While describing the coin, the terms "King or hero" were even used in the case of the bowman on the reverse.

The coin should be recognized as belonging to a completely independent issue. Nonetheless, the similarity between both issues is not accidental and is very probable that the discussed bronze coin was iconographically inspired by the “Great King/Iranian horseman” series. On the other hand, there is a striking similarity between the archer on the discussed coin and the one on the reverses of the Sabakes aes. Except for attire, the attitude, and especially the placing of the left, bent leg attracts attention. This is a completely different solution in comparison to the canonical depiction of the “Great King” type II. The two features, i.e. the similarity of the iconographic scheme to the “Great King/Iranian horseman” type mentioned above and a convergence with the depiction of archer on the Sabakes issue, allows us to date the anonymous bronze coin to the years c. 350/340–332 BC.<sup>57</sup> The answer to the question of the attribution of the issue is more complex. It was perhaps struck in south-western Asia Minor, in Lycia (?) or Caria (?).<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, the strong similarity of the archer to the one on the Sabakes issue does not exclude Egypt or the Levant as a region where the coin was produced. Without any information about coin provenance, of course the proposition remains only hypothetical.

The tiarate head on the obverse of type 2, on the other hand, belongs to the most popular Achaemenid coin types.<sup>59</sup> The motif is well known from different regions of the western part of the Achaemenid realm, including Phoenicia and Samaria.<sup>60</sup> The depiction on Sabakes coins belongs to the “Type 1 sub-variant B1” with kyrbasia’s lappets tied at the chin, the neckpiece and the top hanging loose on the visible side of the head, making a fold with a semicircular edge. Precisely the same variant was used in the case of a tiarate head on bronze coins struck by Sabakes’ successor Mazakes.<sup>61</sup> Such a variant of the tiarate head is well known from Cilician, Cypriot (?) and Samaritan issues, but is also attested in the case of some coins with full figure depictions of “Iranian” warriors.<sup>62</sup> The dating of variant B can be placed in c. 360–330 BC.<sup>63</sup> The inspiration for the Sabakes coins should be sought in the circle of above mentioned coinages. In one of my earlier papers, I pointed out that

<sup>57</sup> The coin inspired by the issue of “The Great King/Iranian horseman” must have been created slightly later than the beginning of the minting of the latter issue. This is evidenced by the processing of the reverse type. The resemblance of the archer on the reverse to the representation on the Sabakes coins brings the time of the issue in question closer to c. 340–333 BC. The auctioneer dated the issue in question to around 350–334 BC, inspired by the dating of the coins “Great King/Iranian horseman”.

<sup>58</sup> The coin in question was assigned to Caria by the auctioneer. It remains an open question whether the reason for such an attribution was the assigning of the coin to the “Great King/Iranian horseman” issue or whether the auctioneer had any more detailed information on the provenance of the coin.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. BODZEK 2011a: 219ff; NIESWANDT 2012.

<sup>60</sup> QEDAR 2000–2002 (Phoenicia); BODZEK 2011b (Samaria).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. NEWELL 1938: 72, no. 41, Pl. IV; NICOLET-PIERRE 1979: 228, Type C; VAN ALFEN 2002: 32, no. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. BODZEK 2011b: 10.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem*: 11.

the most probable prototype for Egyptian satrap coins was one of the Samarian issues.<sup>64</sup> I support the hypothesis.

Sabakes' choices for the types of bronze coins appear to be thoughtful and represent a cohesive idea. The double use of the image of an Iranian rather than a royal archer, as indicated by a relatively unpopular motif, is not accidental. Instead, it indicates a well-thought-out iconographic program. The image of the tiarate head belongs to the same program. Both motives represent the non-royal "satrapic" iconographic repertoire that was apparently understandable to representatives of the Achaemenid administration. The borrowing of the obverse motif of one of the issues from the repertoire of the Mazaios coinage also fits in this iconographic "koine". The general dating of the presence of the above-mentioned motifs in coinage, which closed in the last 30 years of the Achaemenid rule, may have some significance here. At least in part, through the motifs of the Iranian archer and the tiarate head, the aforementioned program refers to the military and administrative sphere of Sabakes' power. Such an interpretation is reinforced by the presence of the legend with the name of the satrap.

## CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, although all the issues minted on behalf of Sabakes undoubtedly had an economic background, in terms of iconographic message, depending on the metal, they were assigned a slightly different role. The choice of the Athenian "owl" as a type of tetradrachm was a natural consequence of the local tradition and the expectations of coin recipients. The only element of the ideological message that connects the coins with the person of the satrap is the presence of his name written in Aramaic. In fact, we face a similar situation with fractional silver. However, the aforementioned opportunity to choose this type of coin and not another, partially inspired by the Mazaios coins, may indicate that economic and non-economic reasons were combined in this case. With regard to the bronze coins, the selection of types was closely related to non-economic reasons.

Much of this pattern was continued by Mazakes, the successor of Sabakes.<sup>65</sup> He struck Attic "owl" type tetradrachms and similar drachms, thus types representing economic choice, as well as silver and bronze coins with at least partially non-economic iconography (sitting Iranian personage/Iranian horseman; tiarate head/warship). As van Alfen rightly pointed out, although the latter type generally refers to the Phoenician-Levantine tradition, the choice of the tiarate head as the obverse type indicates a continuation of the idea present on the coins of his predecessor. It

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>65</sup> Cf. NICOLET-PIERRE 1979; VAN ALFEN 2002; WOJCIECHOWSKA 2019.

cannot be ruled out that the reverse type was not only a simple borrowing from the Sidonian coinage, but in connection with the obverse depiction it was intended to refer to the command of the fleet stationed in the province. It would therefore be a repetition of the iconographic pattern used many decades earlier by Pharnabazos.<sup>66</sup> As a testimony to the continuation of the idea of referring to the satrapic iconographic repertoire, there is perhaps a unique obol known from the market and attributed to Mazakes on the basis of the presence of the characteristic “Mazakes sign”.<sup>67</sup> If the attribution of this coin is correct, and its dating falls into the Egyptian period of the satrap’s activity, it would be testimony to the fact that Mazakes sought other motifs known from satrapic coinage, i.e. the “seated figure of the King” and the “Iranian horseman”. It would also be testimony to the deliberate changes made by Mazakes towards individualizing his fractional silver and bronze coinage.

## ABBREVIATIONS

SNG FRANCE – E. LEVANTE, *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. France 2. Cabinet des Médailles: Cilicie*, Paris 1993.

SNG LEVANTE – E. LEVANTE and P. WEISS, *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. Switzerland I: Levante-Cilicia*, I. VECCHI (ed.), Berne 1986.

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. BODZEK 2000.

<sup>67</sup> IDEM 2011a: 249f, Pl. XII, 17; IDEM 2014.

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PLATE 1

Fig. 1. Persia, Egypt, Sabakes (338–333), AR tetradrachm

Photo: courtesy of the Toruń District Museum

Fig. 2. Persia, Egypt, Sabakes (338–333), AR tetradrachm

Photo: CNG 90, lot 760

Fig. 3. Persia, Egypt, Sabakes (338–333), AE double unit (?); American Numismatic Society, Inv. No. 1944.100.75464. Scale 1:1 and 3:1

Photo: courtesy of ANS

Fig. 4. Persia, Egypt, Sabakes (338–333), AE unit (?). Scale 1:1 and 3:1

Photo: CNG Electronic Auction 251, lot 179

PLATE 2

Fig. 5. L'RYYN?, Western Lycia, c. 350–330 BC, AE, chalkus. Scale 1:1 and 3:1

Photo: Künker 133, lot 7728

Fig. 6. Cilicia, Tarsos, Mazaios (361–334), as satrap of Cilicia, AR obol. Scale 1:1 and 3:1

Photo: CNG Electronic Auction 498, lot 167

Fig. 7. Uncertain satrap, Western Asia Minor (?), c. 360/340–333/332 BC (?), AE, chalkus. Scale 1:1 and 3:1

Photo: [www.ancientimports.com](http://www.ancientimports.com) (accessed on 12 November 2010)



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