

# NOTAE NUMISMATICAE

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# ZAPISKI NUMIZMATYCZNE



Tom XV

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

Kraków 2020

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Kraków 2020

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Redakcja

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present volume XV of *Notae Numismaticae – Zapiski Numizmatyczne* to you. In accordance with the principles that we have adopted, our texts are published in the conference languages with English and Polish abstracts. The whole of the present volume can be found as PDF's on the website of the National Museum in Krakow (<https://mnk.pl/notae-numismaticae-zapiski-numizmatyczne-1>), as are previously published volumes of the journal. The website also contains general information about the journal as well as information for prospective authors and reviewers.

The Editors

## FRÉDÉRIQUE DUYRAT

*Wealth and Warfare. The Archaeology of Money in Ancient Syria*, Numismatic Studies 34, The American Numismatic Society, New York 2016, 619 pages, 73 figures, 37 maps; ISSN 0517–4048, ISBN 978-0-89732-346-1

The American Numismatic Society is renowned for publishing many important volumes, which are often true milestones in the studies of the history of money. Over the last decade, in particular, we have seen several essential works released by this institution. Among those, we should take special note of the monumental over-600-pages-long study by Frédérique Duyrat on the money of ancient Syria, which is more specifically an attempt to reconstruct a view of the monetary circulation of Syria, the function of money in this particular territory, but also to determine the nature of the transformations of this picture in the course of almost six centuries. The chronological extent of the study spans a period from the emergence of the first imported coins in Syria (late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC) to the decline of the Hellenistic coinage during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. The historical designation of Syria, as employed here by the author, also refers to the territories which are not parts of Syria in the modern-day sense of the name, such as Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, and some parts of present-day Turkey. F. Duyrat, who is currently the head of the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, has been a long-time expert of coinage and monetary circulation in the ancient Levant as well as one of the outstanding specialists in this field and the author of many significant publications, notably a monograph on the coinage of Arados in the Hellenistic period.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the compositional structure of F. Duyrat's work, which is made up of nine chapters and an introduction, the volume could be divided into three constituent parts: introduction, catalogue and analysis. In the introduction, the author outlines the general idea and the scope of the present work, briefly referring to the origins and the further development of her interest in coin hoards and finds, and also defines the basic terms of relevance such as "currency circulation" (p. 7f) and "hoard and treasure". (p. 9ff) In the former case, F. Duyrat is right in pointing to the complex nature of the currency circulation in Antiquity, which was not limited solely to coin money. The question of defining the hoard has been discussed from a theoretical perspective, primarily as based on the French and Anglophone traditions and literary sources, with no reference to works in other languages, which the author herself admits (p. 10, n. 31). It remains a matter of dispute whether such a choice

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<sup>1</sup> DUYRAT 2005.

of source material is justified. Further on, the author goes on to discuss and make a brief analysis, all in the context of ancient Syria, of a number of numismatic sources, in particular the hoard inventories, beginning from S. P. Noe's works, through the *Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards* (hereafter *IGCH*) to the *Coin Hoards*.<sup>2</sup> Another group of publications discussed in brief is comprised of regional-themed studies on coin hoards.<sup>3</sup> The other important category of coin finds as described in the introduction is made up of finds recovered in the course of archaeological explorations, even though Duyrat narrows down this category to isolated finds (p. 19ff). At this point, the author offers the following reflection in a rather sad tone: "Paradoxically, despite the good scientific conditions surrounding their discovery, it becomes clear that coins found in an archaeological context are no easier to study than those that come to us through the antiquities market". The observations mentioned in the introduction are discussed in more detail in the further parts of the book.

The second part of the volume, a catalogue, is composed of two chapters dedicated to coin hoards (Chap. 1, pp. 25–206) and finds recorded during archaeological explorations in the Levant as defined in the introduction above (Chap. 2, pp. 207–255), respectively. Altogether, this part makes up more than 1/3 of the entire work (as many as 232 pages!), but the author's decision to place a catalogue for both of these coin find groups at the beginning is fairly controversial. In my view, a catalogue at the end would have been a better idea in terms of the volume's compositional value, although the division into two constituent parts is by all means justified. F. Duyrat's coin hoards catalogue contains a collection of the information already included in some of the previous publications, in the general inventories such as the *IGCH*, regional-themed studies (e.g., J. Elayi and A. G. Elayi),<sup>4</sup> volumes dedicated to specific coinage types, e.g., *Seleucid Coins*,<sup>5</sup> monograph studies of individual coin hoards published as books or articles, but also left in various unpublished archival records. Also included are some previously never published coin hoards, while the details on those published have been, wherever possible, emended and supplemented. Furthermore, the author had to decide if many hoards of uncertain provenance should be included in the catalogue or not. According to the reasonable option she has adopted, coin hoards with very plausible Syrian origins have been incorporated into the catalogue. In total, the catalogue consists of 360 items, 355 of which have already been accounted for in the statistics. The individual hoards have been described along the lines of the pattern employed in the *IGCH* and in

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<sup>2</sup> NOE 1937; THOMPSON, MØRKHOLM and KRAAY 1973; PRICE et AL 1975–2010.

<sup>3</sup> ELAYI and ELAYI 1993.

<sup>4</sup> PRICE et AL 1975–2010.

<sup>5</sup> HOUGHTON, LORBER and HOOVER 2008.

the *Coin Hoards* series. The author attempts to introduce, as much as possible, a certain measure of standardization here, which may have been quite challenging at times. Wherever it is relevant, commentary notes have been added as part of the information on the individual coin hoards. Finally, there is also a possibly most exhaustive bibliography, in chronological order, provided for each particular hoard.

A catalogue of coin finds recovered from archaeological excavations, with 58 locations included therein, has a somewhat different composition. First of all, F. Duyrat was confronted with has to make a selection among the sites being considered. For some of the locations, namely some larger ancient settlements, more than one archaeological site has been taken into account. The coins are classified according to two main groups: those from the Persian and the Hellenistic periods, with brief descriptions of the pieces (in a summary form). F. Duyrat provides necessary commentary for every site, also adding some relevant literature. In this particular instance, the author had to cope with a range of difficulties which were quite different than those encountered in analyses of coin hoards, primarily the limited informative contents of excavation coin publications. F. Duyrat is not the first to have touched on this specific issue (for example, let us recall F. de Callatay's observations in this respect).<sup>6</sup> Those difficulties would stem mainly from the lack of a standardization model in the publications of excavation coin finds. Another reason, it seems, may lie in the disparate needs of archaeologists and numismatists. There is also something more at issue here. One should not overlook the fact that the unsatisfactory quality and informative contents of coin find publications obtained from archaeological explorations are also due to the fact that the numismatists involved in coin find publishing activities, who are often the authors of such studies, may know little about archaeology, while at the same time, archaeologists may have a limited knowledge of numismatics. As a result, misinterpretations of contexts may arise further leading to omissions, by either party, of essential details in publications. Eventually, it should be noted that achieving a standardization in the area of describing and publishing excavation coins is a long-lasting process which may be as time-consuming as the generally understood development of the methodology of archaeological works. Due to the progress in the development of the research, it is also difficult to blame an author for any possible shifts in the attributions of the published coins based on the previous publications. Within the context of the standardization, the present volume may be of particular significance as a sort of a guidebook for those who wish to publish excavation coins as the author provides a list of requirements and expectations concerning such publications. Hopefully, prospective authors can find a wealth of useful information to assist them in their future efforts.

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<sup>6</sup> DE CALLATAŇ 2006.

The next six chapters contain the analytical discussions of the data collected in the two catalogues. In the four of these chapters, F. Duyrat talks about the transformations of the picture of the monetary circulation and the coinage in ancient Syria, successively from the Achaemenid period (Chap. 4, pp. 301–327), through the ascendancy of Alexander the Great and his direct successors (Chap. 5, pp. 329–347) and the time after the year 301 BC (Chap. 6: “The Two Syrias”, pp. 349–366), up to the period from Antioch III’s victory in the Fifth Syrian War until the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (Chap. 7: “From Kings to Cities”, pp. 367–403). Each one of these periods is described along with the consideration of the most significant and characteristic phenomena related to the inflow, production, and circulation of the coinage. The Achaemenid era appears to be *de facto* an introduction to her “proper” discussions concerning the later periods. The author’s attention is for the most part concentrated, on the periods following Alexander’s conquest of Syria until the end of the Hellenistic period, which is quite clear in view of the evolving customs in the use of the coin money in Syria during the Hellenistic period. We can see the author’s competence and discretion in working through the large body of the information coming from coin hoards and excavation finds as she considers metals, weight standards, provenance of coins, questions of imitation coins, character of particular coin finds, etc. All of these points are presented in the context of the complex political and economic history of ancient Syria. In effect, the reader can trace the numismatic history of Syria over the course of several centuries. This narrative account gives us an outline of the more general phenomena characteristic of the entire territory in the scope of the author’s interest, but it also attempts to analyze those of a more regional nature, such as the use of smaller denominations in the southern parts of the Levant and the bronze coinage of the Hasmonean dynasty.

In the last two chapters, the author returns to question of coin money in Syria through the lens of hoards, but in consideration of the two important, and at the same time very interesting, aspects: wealth and monetization. The first one is addressed in Chapter 8 (“Wealth and Coinage”, pp. 405–423), where F. Duyrat makes a hoard value-based analysis of various containers for coin hoards. According to one of the key conclusions, the type of container would be essentially unrelated to the volume and worth of a specific hoard. Another important issue is the size, and consequently the value, of coin hoards in the context of their original owners’ affluence. The author has based her analysis on the details from various written sources, also those relating to other regions (such as Attica). Following the assessment of the respective values of the hoards composed of gold, silver, and bronze coins from the territory of Syria, F. Duyrat concludes that a majority of coin hoards may have been owned by the middle classes (in terms of material wealth), with much

smaller amounts of hoards possessed by the very rich and the poor. In turn, Chapter 9 (“Coin Use and Monetization”, pp. 425–469) is concerned with the monetization in ancient Syria. The contents of the coin hoards in terms of the represented precious metal types and denominations are briefly discussed and analyzed here, all in the context of chronological details. The author points to the scarcity of gold and the concurrent common use of silver. In the context of the denominations in ancient Syria, the presence of some minor types characteristic of the southern Levant during the Persian period is discussed, among other questions, and compared with the situations in some other regions (pp. 431–433). Quite evidently, however, in the particular case of the Persian period, there is no relevant comparison to Cilicia, where a number of small denomination types continued to remain in circulation as well. Very interesting findings have also been stated in the context of the shifts in the movement directions of silver coinage in ancient Syria. The geographical situation of Syria is also pointed out as one of the factors which determined the movement of this particular coin metal type.

For all the chapters with analytical sections, the author has enriched the written commentary with numerous tables and diagrams, which should make it easier to interpret and verify the details found in the analyses. Another important element are the numerous (37, in total) well-drawn and sufficiently detailed maps, a very convenient and useful resource for the reader. In turn, the photographs of coins which are to illustrate the principal types being discussed can be regarded only as something of an extra aid here.

Conclusions are basically a brief recapitulation of the contents from the previous chapters. The principal part of the volume is complemented with a couple of appendixes: a list of containers, in a tabular form and set down as a sort of a database for the observations in Chapter 8 (Appendix 1, pp. 779–780), the circumstances of the discovery of the Kirikan Hoard as described in the e-mail correspondence between Eduardo Levante and Arthur Houghton (Appendix 2, pp. 481–482), and a table of concordance between F. Duyrat’s numbers and those in the *IGCH*, the *Coin Hoards*, and some other publications (pp. 482–501).<sup>7</sup> An extensive bibliography (34 pages long; pp. 507–540) contains all the essential works relevant to the subject under consideration and can be seen as the evidence of the author’s impressive erudition. There is also one general index at the end of the volume.

Among the very few shortcomings of the present publication, one could mention some minor repetitions and omissions. These are however of secondary importance as they may have been the outcome of the assumed structure of the work and, at least in part, of its massive volume. In her observations, F. Duyrat

<sup>7</sup> ELAYI and ELAYI 1993; SEYRIG 1973; KADMAN 1967; SCHLUMBERGER 1957.

makes very efficient use of the numismatic data relating to both coin hoards and excavation finds. She asks pertinent questions and attempts to find correct answers. Statistical data are handled properly and one should not fail to notice the competent and extensive use of the results and findings drawn from the works published by many other scholars, especially D. Schlumberger, H. Seyrig, G. Le Rider, J. and A.G. Elayi, A. Meadows, and K. Butcher, but these are employed in a creative manner, with occasional corrections to their observations. In consequence, the author gives us a monumental, very creative, highly informative, and fully original work, which points to a modern (regional, yet at the same time based on a broad perspective) analysis of details in the form of hoards and other coin finds as one of the directions in which modern numismatic research should follow. Another significant conclusion refers to stressing the necessity of making proper use of the material from archaeological excavations and the above-mentioned definition of the requirements for certain standards set out for such publications. It should also be made very clear that F. Duyrat's volume is one of those works which we will continue reading and consulting for the decades to come. *Wealth and Warfare. The Archaeology of Money in Ancient Syria* could as a matter of fact be considered to be the author's *opus magnum*, although it is our wish that this is certainly not her final word in the subject matter of ancient coinage.

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