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Georges Le Rider

*Monnayage et finances de Philippe II: Un état de la question*  
Meletemata 23, Athens, 1996. 198 pp., 9 pl. ISBN 960-7094-92-1

Arguably the greatest monument of Georges Le Rider's distinguished career is his masterly corpus *Le monnayage d'argent et d'or de Philippe II* (Paris 1977). Le Rider has marked the twentieth anniversary of its publication with a monograph defining the current state of our knowledge of Philip's lifetime and early posthumous precious metal coinage. The new work, intended for numismatists and Macedonian historians alike, surveys the principal findings of *Philippe* and assesses the implications of subsequent scholarship. All critical numismatic examples are illustrated in nine plates.

The first chapter notes new evidence, including bibliography, hoards, and coins with types and/or controls not recorded in *Philippe*. The most remarkable new coin is a bronze published by C.A. Hersh, which combines the types of Perdiccas III with an inscription naming Philip;<sup>1</sup> otherwise the numismatic material merely adds detail to the overview presented in 1977. The bibliography lists a number of historical and epigraphic publications that lie outside the normal purview of numismatists. Most salient are M.B. Hatzopoulos' studies of the royal letter from Oliveni,<sup>2</sup> which have redated Philip's accession to June – October of 360 and his death from summer to October of 336, i.e. after the beginning of the Macedonian year, so that Alexander's first regnal year corresponds to 336/5 rather than 337/6. Also interesting are two inscriptions from Delphi, dated shortly after Alexander's death, that refer to gold pentadrachms; these have been identified by J. Bousquet as the gold quarter staters minted by Philip and Alexander.<sup>3</sup> Cited throughout the monograph are other historical data of direct relevance to numismatists: Hatzopoulos has downdated the transfer of the Macedonian royal capital from Aegae to Pella to the reign of Amyntas III, in the aftermath of the Chalcidian incursion of 383–379; and he has demonstrated that Philippi enjoyed a special status in relation to the Macedonian king, perhaps until 168.

The central chapters of the monograph are devoted to separate treatments of Philip's silver and gold coinage. Le Rider's summaries of his 1977 conclusions are useful even to those familiar with *Philippe*, for he has provided handy outlines (not available in the corpus) combining controls and die links, and honestly points out both strengths and weaknesses of his arguments. The project then proceeds in debate format: Le Rider first presents the views of his principal critics as objectively as possible, then responds using his own critical judgment.

<sup>1</sup> C.A. HERSH, An Unpublished Coin of Philip II of Macedonia, from his first issue of bronzes, AJN 1, 1989, p. 33-36.

<sup>2</sup> M.B. HATZOPoulos, The Oliveni Inscription and the Date of Philip II's Reign, in: Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage (Washington 1982), p. 21-42.

<sup>3</sup> J. BOUSQUET, CID II, 1989, 108.1.15 and 109 C, 1.10. *Id.*, Etudes sur les comptes de Delphes (1989), Les pentédrachmes d'or, p. 139-143 (= Inscriptions de Delphes, BCH 109, 1985, p. 249-253).

*Philippe*'s arrangement of the silver coinage into two series, one of Pella and the other of Amphipolis, was promptly challenged by Le Rider's good friend Martin Price. Price was troubled by hoard evidence that seemed to identify Philip's earliest issues in the unmarked tetradrachms near the beginning of Le Rider's Series A, Group II. Citing stylistic factors as well, Price proposed that Series A should be divided at that point, and attributed the resulting three series to three mints. The first, Aegae, began operations shortly after Philip's Olympic racing victory of 356, using the victorious jockey reverse type and, very briefly, a disposition of the legend inherited from the coinage of Perdiccas III. The other two mints, Pella and perhaps Amphipolis (or Acanthus, Philippi, or Orthagoria), opened simultaneously after the defeat of the Chalcidians in 348 and initially employed the royal horseman reverse as a symbol of military victory, adopting the hellenizing jockey type toward the end of the reign as more suited to Philip's claims of panhellenic leadership.

Le Rider explicitly does not reject Price's classification or assert the superiority of his own, but rather claims to demonstrate the ambiguity of the evidence. His approach to the embarrassing hoard evidence sounds a bit defensive. He attacks the integrity of two of the hoards (Vergina, 1961 and Gephyra, 1965) and suggests that the remaining three (Kalamaria, 1963, Thessalonica region, c. 1965, and commerce, 1970) may have been a single lot divided commercially, diminishing the impressive basis for Price's critique, but not really rebutting it. Le Rider also disputes Price's dating of the hoards to 348, citing the presence of Larissa drachms of Herrmann's Group VIIA in the Thessalonica region and Kalamaria hoards. According to Le Rider, the Larissa chronology proposed by T.R. Martin rules out a date for these drachms before 348 and supports his own dating of the hoards to the decade 340–330. This is an undue extrapolation from Martin's contribution, which challenged certain assumptions in the then-reigning orthodoxy regarding Larissa, without providing anything approaching a full account of her coinage. The Larissaean series has still not received the kind of detailed analysis that would support reliable chronological conclusions. Le Rider's remarks on style are more persuasive. He attributes the stylistic break observed by Price to the activity of a new and talented artist, and points to several features – the arrangement of the locks of hair on Zeus' neck, a simplified palm branch, a flaplike ornament hanging from the horse's ear down its neck – that span the break. He shows Price's claims of monetary continuity with Perdiccas III to be overstated and even self-contradictory, though consistent with the new bronze published by Hersh. Le Rider counters Price's chronology on the ground that the royal horseman type fits better with Philip's concerns and policies before 348, and the jockey type with his panhellenic aspirations after 348, though the Olympic victory of 356 did merit immediate celebration on drachms and hemidrachms. The form of the palm branch provides a second argument, since Price's chronology would make the simplified form earlier than the more realistic form, a development that seems counterintuitive.

Le Rider's account of Philip's gold coinage has been questioned only for its low chronology, which is based on the small output of Group I in both series and the preponderance of Group II staters in hoards buried c. 323. In *Philippe*, pp. 432–433, the introduction of Philip's gold coinage is tentatively dated c. 345 or 342–340; in *Monnayage et finances*, this date creeps upward without explanation, to after 348 and

perhaps a few years later. Notable challenges have been mounted by M.B. Hatzopoulos and T.R. Martin.<sup>4</sup> In 1991 Hatzopoulos published twelve bills of sale from Amphipolis, of which the seventh provides the earliest reference to Philip staters (and a hemistater). The documents are dated by the terms of two eponymous magistrates – Sparges, an epistates appointed by Philip (in 358/7 according to Hatzopoulos), and the local priest of Asclepios. Hatzopoulos places the seventh document around 352, and dates the introduction of Philip's gold staters similarly. Against Hatzopoulos' interpretation Le Rider cites numismatic studies by C.C. Lorber and O. Picard<sup>5</sup> that point to continued production of a civic coinage at Amphipolis for a few years after its capture by Philip, so that the first term of Sparges might have fallen several years later than 358/7; furthermore, the possibility of lacunae in the record could force the critical document yet lower, perhaps into the second half of Philip's reign. Still, Le Rider warns that Hatzopoulos' enormous expertise is not to be discounted, and 352/1 remains a real possibility for the date of the introduction of Philip's gold coinage.

Arguing from Philip's expenses as attested in literary sources, Martin too places the inauguration of the gold coinage around 355 or shortly before 350. Le Rider shows the argument from historical probability to be inconclusive: various expenditures attested in the literary sources could have been financed by means of gold objects, gold staters of Philippi, or other gold coins not of Philip's mintage. The controversy over the implications of the Corinth, 1930 hoard of gold staters seems similarly inconclusive: Martin properly considers the hoard a savings hoard, without much chronological significance. Le Rider adduces several comparable hoards abandoned c. 323, proving an episode of hoard loss at this date; but it is hardly clear that this evidence can define the importance of Philip's posthumous stater production, which was significant according to Le Rider and less so according to Martin. A more compelling sort of evidence comes from the Amphipolis sales records, where documents 10A and 10B equate 170 Philip staters with 85 «grand staters», a locution than must refer to Alexander's distaters. Since Hyla Troxell has now dated introduction of the Macedonian distaters c. 325,<sup>6</sup> these texts show that the *philippeion* remained the dominant gold stater in Macedon near the end of Alexander's reign. Le Rider also cites an Athenian public account inscribed c. 335 (IG II2, 1526, ll. 22–23), which apparently refers to δαρεικοὺς Φιλιππείοντς (darics of Philip). He asks whether this old-fashioned term for a gold coin of stater size implies a relatively late date for the introduction of Philip's staters, but seems to decide that it was merely a lingering usage, since contemporary accounts from Delphi already mention *philippeioi chrysoi* (gold pieces of Philip).

<sup>4</sup> M.B. HATZOPoulos, *Actes de vente d'Amphipolis*, Meletemata 14, 1991; T.R. Martin, *Sovereignty and Coinage in Classical Greece* (Princeton 1985), p. 271-292.

<sup>5</sup> C.C. LORBER, *Amphipolis, the Civic Coinage in Gold and Silver* (Los Angeles 1990), pp. 39-50, 52-56; O. PICARD, *Deux émissions de bronze d'Amphipolis*, BCH 118, 1994, p. 207-214.

<sup>6</sup> H.A. TROXELL, *Studies in the Macedonian Coinage of Alexander the Great*, ANSNS 21 (New York 1997), p. 122-128.

At the end of the day, consideration of new scholarship has persuaded Le Rider to change his views on Philip's coinage in only two respects: he would now place inauguration of the tetradrachm series after 356; and he embraces the implications of Troxell's studies dating the introduction of Alexander's imperial tetradrachms in or after 333, so that Philip's early posthumous silver must be considered prior to Alexander's tetradrachms bearing the same controls, not parallel to them.

The ninth chapter of *Monnayage et finances* applies statistical methods developed since 1977 to estimate the number of obverse dies employed for Philip's silver and gold coinage and to compare production rates for Philip and for Alexander, showing that Philip's Group II staters were produced more intensively than Alexander's Macedonian gold *in toto*, a finding consistent with the preponderance of Philip staters in Macedonian hoards deposited c. 323. Various uncertainties preclude a useful estimate of Philip's total monetary output, but Le Rider offers detailed observations on rhythms of emission and evolution of the control system, with its implications for the involvement of magistrates.

The final chapter offers broader ruminations on the role of Philip's coinage in finance. A date after 356 for his earliest tetradrachm issues raises questions of historical interpretation. Philip's expenses between 360 and 356 may have been paid in the currency of his predecessors, but his need for soldiers was probably met in part through feudal obligations, with Macedonian aristocrats perhaps compensated through land distributions. Payments in kind and tax exemptions could also take the place of currency. Le Rider surveys various explanations for Philip's delay in coining, including depletion of the Macedonian treasury early in the reign, an access of war booty, and Thessalian revenues accruing to Philip as archon (not *tagos*) of the Thessalian koinon. He concludes that the king had the means to strike precious metal coinage, but chose not to. Philip's apparently pragmatic attitude toward coinage leads to an examination of T.R. Martin's thesis that coinage, for the Greeks, was not (or at least not fundamentally) an expression of sovereignty. Le Rider is clearly uncomfortable with this notion. His discussion of specific examples can be illuminating; but both of the absolute positions have already been excluded by Martin's exegesis, so that the remaining disagreements boil down to differences of degree.

*Monnayage et finances* is offered as a last homage to the memory of Martin Price, and it is fitting that the monograph ends with a coda related to one of Price's particular interests – Alexander's eagle coinage. Both Price and Le Rider have interpreted the eagle coinage as a special currency intended for internal circulation within Macedon. Troxell has pointed out that the eagle tetradrachms are metrologically distinct from the drachms and silver fractions, and Le Rider thus isolates the tetradrachms for special study here. He provides provenances and die counts, cites evidence supporting their attribution to Alexander's early reign, and then presents counterarguments in favor of a somewhat less likely date after 323. He delicately refrains from exploiting the evidence of a 1992 Thessalian hoard supporting the earlier chronology, whose publication was entrusted to Ute Wartenberg and has since appeared in *Numismatic Chronicle* 1997, pp. 179-188. As Le Rider observes, the rarity of the eagle tetradrachms suggests that they were an experiment soon abandoned, or intentionally withdrawn from circulation. Their mint attribution remains uncertain, and a temporary or unaccustomed mint cannot be ruled out.

An unexpected virtue of *Monnayage et finances* is a fine new map of Macedon. Topography, ancient towns and cities, and provinces are more fully identified than on the map in *Philippe*, and at least one mistake is corrected (the location of Olynthus). The new map is a valuable resource for the study of Macedonian tribal, civic, and royal coinages, and sets a high standard for other numismatic works.

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