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Autor: Touratsoglou, I.P.

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Georges Le Rider

Alexandre Le Grand. Monnaie, finances et politique

Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 2003

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Georges Le Rider's (GLR) interest in Alexander the Great originated in the period long before the time when this learned and prolific Frenchman, of great repute among numismatists, wrote his first articles dealing with particular issues minted by Alexander. This interest in fact dates back to the years when he published and commented, either on his own or with others, on various hoards from the east or from the Greek peninsula.

- *Un trésor de tétradraches d'Alexandre trouvé à Ackakale en 1958*, RN 30, 1989, pp. 42-54, pl. V-X (in conjunction with N. Olçay)
- *Un trésor de statères d'or trouvés à Potidée en 1984 et à Scioné en 1985*, RN 33, 1991, pp. 89-96, pl. VII

Nor did Le Rider sit idly by, waiting for the appearance, in 1991, of the monumental work by M.J. Price, *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus*. Instead, he undertook a detailed study of the principles of Alexander's coinage.

- La date des premières monnaies d'Alexandre, Bull. Cercle d'Études Numismatiques 8-4, 1971, pp. 65-66.
- *Les alexandres d'argent en Asie Mineure et dans l'Orient séleucides au III^e siècle av. J.-C. (c. 275-225): Remarques sur le système monétaire des Séleucides et des Ptolémées*, JS janvier-septembre 1989, pp. 3-51, pl. I-VI
- *Sur le frai de certaines monnaies anciennes et contemporaines*, in: *Mélanges de la Bibliothèque de La Sorbonne offerts à André Tuilier* (Paris 1988), pp. 70-83

GLR wrote a monumental work on the coinage of Philip II, together with many articles and a whole book in reply to Price. Alexander, of course, has always been a subject of interest on the part of the broader public. This interest intensified during the 1990s and it was this interest, together with GLR's own interest in Alexander that led him to deal passionately and repeatedly with the production of coinage and the economic policy of the great Macedonian. GLR thus made an extremely valuable and personal contribution to the study of Alexander's coinage and of his general policy, economic and otherwise that Alexander followed during his short and troubled life. Even if some of his articles and review-articles were published in response to essays written by others, GLR's contribution is to be regarded as highly original.

- *Histoire économique et monétaire de l'Orient hellénistique*, Annuaire du Collège de France 1995-1996 (Paris 1996) pp. 829-860
- *Le monnayage perse en Cilicie au IV^e siècle*, NACQT 26, 1997, pp. 151-167
- *Cléomène de Naucratis*, BCH 121, 1997, pp. 71-93
- *Les tétradrachmes macédoniens d'Alexandre: réflexions sur leur classement, le nombre des ateliers et les lieux de frappe*, in: R. Ashton, S. Hurter (eds.), *Studies in Greek Numismatics in memory of Martin Jessop Price* (London 1998) pp. 237-245, pl. 53

- *Alexander in Asia Minor*, in: A. Burnett, U. Wartenberg, R. Witschonke (eds.), *Coins of Macedonia and Rome. Essays in Honour of Charles Hersh* (London 1998) pp. 49-57
- *Antimène de Rhodes à Babylone*, in: *Alexander's legacy in the East*, in: O. BOPEARACHCHI / C.A. BROMBERG / F. GRENET (Hg.), *Studies in Honor of Paul Bernard*, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 12 (1997 [2001]), pp. 21-140
- *Le monnayage d'or et d'argent frappée en Égypte sous Alexandre: le rôle monétaire d'Alexandre*, in: *Colloque Alexandrie: une mégapole cosmopolite*, Actes (Paris 1999), pp. 11-23

Reviews

- M. Thompson, *Alexander's Drachm Mints. II: Lampsacus and Abydos* (New York 1991) in: *RN* 36, 1994, pp. 335-336
- M.J. Price, *The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus*. A British Museum Catalogue (Zurich 1991), in: *SNR* 71, 1992, pp. 214-225
- H.A. Troxell, *Studies in the Macedonian Coinage of Alexander the Great*, *ANSNS* 21 (New York 1997), in: *SNR* 77, 1998, pp. 663-673

The form of GLR's book discussed here is something new in his work on Alexander. Although the book constitutes a compilation of views formulated in most of GLR's previous articles, with the exception, however, of the final chapter in which the author goes through the issues in a lucid, methodical and systematic manner and offers his views in the hope of provoking further thought, it offers, nevertheless, a complete synthesis of the economic and numismatic policy of Alexander, something that has hitherto been missing from the international bibliography on the topic.

The general approach of GLR's monograph will appeal to an audience wider than numismatists, who are already aware of the issues. GLR formulated his general idea and structure very clearly in a concisely written article which summarizes his lectures at the Collège de France over the period 1995-1996.¹ The most important points of GLR's position, together with personal comments by the reviewer on various matters, are as follows:

I Staters and Tetradrachms: Athena and Zeus

The gold staters with Athena/Nike with a stylis must have come into circulation for the first time in July 332 BC, in other words, immediately after the conquest of Tyre, whereby Alexander crushed the Persian fleet and thus became, among other things, master of the seas. On the other hand, the silver tetradrachms of Attic standard with Heracles/enthroned Zeus with eagle would have been circulated after November, 333 BC and the victory at Issos.

The iconography of the particular issues depicting Olympian Zeus, Athena and Nike with a stylis, and the choice of time of issue are of a piece with the panhellenic aspect that was lent to the expedition against the Achaemenid empire at the beginning of the operation. The somewhat manufactured moral pretext for the whole operation were the Trojan War and the Persian Wars. The real aims and intentions of Alexander became clear, however, in a series of acts

¹ *Histoire économique et monétaire de l'Orient hellénistique*, in: *Annuaire du Collège de France* (Paris 1996), pp. 829-860.

of a symbolic and a propagandistic aspect. The list of these deeds is well-known, but will be briefly reviewed here: The sacrifices made at the grave of Protesilaos at Elaeus, the laying of a wreath on Achilles's tomb at Troy; the dispatch to Athens of 300 Persian panoplies on the day following the victory in the battle of the Granikos, the warm, encouraging speeches of Panhellenic interest and vivid historic background, made to the *ethnē* comprising the expedition forces before the battles of Issos and Gaugamela; and the dispatch of letters to the Greek cities, announcing the defeat of the Persian tyranny and heralding the autonomy of the Greeks following the successful outcome of these battles and the burning of the palace in Persepolis.²

However, this panhellenic aspect of the conflict between Greeks and Persians ceased to exist the moment the allied forces were dismissed at Ecbatana, in 330 BC.³ Panhellenism was gradually replaced by a policy of idealism, unprecedented for contemporary Greek standards. This has been characterised by modern research as *Verschmelzungspolitik*,⁴ and its principles probably originated long before the events at the river Opis took place in the summer of 324 BC.

It was originally generally believed that Alexander started his gold and silver coinage prior to the expedition, on the day, in fact, following his ascent to the throne (and it is this theory that Price enshrines in his great work). The widely accepted *terminus post quem* today, however, as proposed by, among others, GLR himself, owes a great deal to the views of H.A. Troxell.⁵ Through close study of the tetradrachms in the name of Alexander she proved that it was the Macedonian mint that in fact followed the local mint at Tarsos, rather than the reverse. Furthermore, the imperial title (ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ) was used for the first time on coins struck after Alexander's death, evidently in reference to Alexander IV who was still a minor.

A lower date for the minting and circulation of Alexander's gold and silver issues is further suggested by the conclusions that arise from an examination of the ancient literature and the examination of monetary circulation. The sequence of arguments, elaborated in some detail, is to be found in articles of the present reviewer⁶ and is as follows:

«The evidence of the hoards suggests that tetradrachms in the name of Alexander made their appearance earlier than anywhere else in Thessaly (333-330 BC) and the Peloponnese (330-325 BC), followed by Macedonia (323 BC) and Central Greece (319 BC). Tetradrachms of the young Macedonian are completely unknown in hoards from Euboea.

² See M. FLOWER, Alexander the Great and Panhellenism, in: A. BOSWORTH, E.J. BAYNHAM (eds.), *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford 2000), pp. 96-135, esp. 107ff.

³ Arr. 3.19, 5-6, Diod. 17.74.3. Curtius 6.2.15-17

⁴ See A.B. BOSWORTH, Alexander and the Iranians, JHS 100, 1980, pp. 2ff.

⁵ a) Alexander's Earliest Macedonian Silver, in: W.E. METCALF (ed.), *Mnemata: Papers in Memory of Nancy Waggoner* (New York 1991), pp. 49-61;

b) Studies in the Macedonian Coinage of Alexander the Great, ANSNS 21, 1997.

⁶ I. TOURATSOGLOU, Back to the Future. Alexander the Great's Silver and Gold in the Balkans: the Hoard Evidence, in: A. BURNETT, U. WARTENBERG, R.B. WITSCHONKE (eds.), *Essays in Honour of Charles Hersh*, pp. 71-101 and *idem*, The Price of Power: Drachms in the Name of Alexander the Great in Greece (On the Thessaly/1993 Confiscation), *Eulimene* 1, 2000, pp. 91-118.

«The explanation for this phenomenon is undoubtedly to be sought in a large number of characteristic facts: In accordance with the general practice in the Macedonian kingdom, neither had the newly-married (*neogamoi*) Macedonians of the Asian army sent back to winter in their homeland in 334 BC, with the intention of returning to Gordion the following year,⁷ nor the aged and sick veterans (*apomachoi*) who, it was decided early in the summer of 329, should return from the Oxos to their birthplace,⁸ had received any financial support/salary from Alexander, apart, of course from the *siteresion*;⁹ the Greek allies, on the other hand, whether volunteers or not, were treated as mercenaries, and many of them received special treatment in terms of payment.

«In southern Greece, tetradrachms (in all probability) will have accompanied the Greek mercenaries who were dismissed by Alexander after the torching of the palace at Persepolis in summer 330 BC, and were paid a bonus totalling 2,000 talents in addition to their salary.¹⁰ The early appearance of tetradrachms in hoards from Thessaly, indeed, is probably to be connected with the events at the river Oxus in 329 BC, when a number of Thessalian volunteers were sent home.¹¹

⁷ Arr. I 29.4 (καὶ οἱ νεόγαμοι δὲ οἱ ἐπὶ Μακεδονίας σταλέντες εἰς Γόρδιον ἦκον καὶ ξὺν αὐτοῖς ἄλλη στρατεία καταλεχθεῖσα) - Cf. A.B. BOSWORTH, *Macedonian Manpower under Alexander the Great*, *Ancient Macedonia IV*, 1986, p. 118. J. SEIBERT, *Demographische und wirtschaftliche Probleme Makedoniens in der frühen Diadochenzeit*, in: *Studien zur Alten Geschichte (Festschrift S. Lauffer)*, III, (Rome 1989), p. 843. See also R. BILLOWS, *Kings and Colonists. Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism* (Leiden/New York/Köln 1995), pp. 184ff. for another viewpoint.

⁸ Arr. III 29.5: τῶν τε Μακεδόνων ἐπιλέξας τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους καὶ ἤδη ἀπολέμους ... ἐπ' οἴκου ἀπέστειλεν. Cf. A.B. BOSWORTH, *Macedonian Manpower* (n. 7), pp. 120-121, and R.D. MILNS, *Army Pay and the Military Budget of Alexander the Great*, in: W. WILL (Hg.), *Zu Alexander d. Gr., Festschrift G. Wirth zum 60. Geburtstag am 9.12.86* (Amsterdam 1987), p. 244. According to Curtius 7. 5,27, who is probably confusing his sources at this point, the Macedonian infantry (about four hundred according to N.G.L. HAMMOND, *JHS* 109, 1989, p. 64) were sent back *monitosque ut liberos generarent*. To these, Alexander *dedit terna denarium* (presumably tetradrachms) *milia*. Cf. J. SEIBERT, *Demographische ... Probleme* (see n. 7), p. 840 and pp. 843-844.

⁹ This conclusion is supported by the late appearance of tetradrachms in hoards from Macedonia. R.D. MILNS, *Army Pay* (n. 8), p. 235, properly notes that «we have no positive evidence before the Indian campaign that specifically mentions *payment* being made to Macedonians. »

¹⁰ Arr. III 19.5-6; see also Diodorus 17. 74.3 τοὺς τε ὀφειλομένους μισθοῦς; Curtius 6. 2, 15-17; Plutarch, *Alexander* 42,3: τοὺς μὲν Θετταλοὺς ἱππέας καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ξυμμάχους ἀποπέμπει ὀπίσω ἐπὶ θάλασσαν, τὸν τε μισθὸν ἀποδοὺς αὐτοῖς ἐντελῇ τὸν ξυντεταγμένον καὶ δισχίλια παρ' αὐτοῦ τάλαντα ἐπιδοῦς. - See also N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Alexander's Veterans after his Death*, *GRBS* 25, 1984, p. 53, and *idem*, *The Macedonian State. The Origins, Institutions, and History*, (Oxford 1992²), p. 212. *Idem*, *Alexander the Great, King, Commander and Statesman* (1994³), p. 170; R.D. MILNS, *Army Pay* (*supra*, n. 10), p. 240. Cf. also R. BILLOWS (*supra* n. 8), pp. 184ff. and A.B. BOSWORTH, *The Legacy of Alexander. Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda under the Successors* (Oxford 2002), pp. 64ff. (*Macedonian Numbers at the Death of Alexander the Great*).

¹¹ Arr. III 29.5; see also Arr. V 27,5: καὶ τῶν Θεσσαλῶν τοὺς ἐθελοντὰς καταμείναντες, ἐπ' οἴκου ἀπέστειλεν. Curtius 7. 5,27 adds that Alexander gave *bina talenta equiti* (probably in tetradrachms). For these events, see FR.L. HOLT, *Alexander the Great and Bactria* (Leiden 1989), p. 49. According to HAMMOND, *JHS* 109, 1989, p. 64, the Thessalians sent home numbered about five hundred.

«The channelling of tetradrachms to the Peloponnese, too, especially the west, north and central areas, is undoubtedly to be connected with the confrontation in 331/330 BC between Agis, assisted by the Eleans, Arcadians, and Achaeans, and Antipater, who was supported by Alexander to the sum of at least 3,000 talents of silver.¹² The sources fail to make it clear how far this sum will have been spent on the enlisting of mercenaries (and not for the pay of Macedonians), though it seems fairly certain that this was the case.¹³

«Moreover, as early as 333 BC, in better financial condition than when he set out from Pella,¹⁴ Alexander had sent 'an officer with money ... (probably tetradrachms) ... to recruit mercenaries'.¹⁵

«The fact that there is no express record in the sources of any payment of sums of money prior to 333 BC is not sufficient in itself (and from this point of view) to call into question the correctness of Price's theory, which would lead to the complete acceptance of the view of Zervos, Troxell and Le Rider.¹⁶ The lack of any written testimony, however, does not argue in favour of Price.

«In any case, if the view advanced by H. Troxell is accepted,¹⁷ Alexander's decision to issue coins in his name in 333/332 BC - immediately after the capture of Tarsus - is probably rather to be associated with the need for liquid funds to enlist mercenaries, than to constitute the «means to affirm his authority and ambition». ¹⁸ For it is known that «for his last years Alexander had not drawn any troops from Macedonia», and that «his needs were met not only by enlisting Balkan troops and Greek mercenaries but also by training and employing very great numbers of Asian troops in all branches of the army». ¹⁹

II Drachms: the Price of Power

As regards the Alexander drachms and their dating towards the end of the reign and life of Alexander,²⁰ GLR's review of M. Thompson's main article *Paying the Mercenaries*²¹, and a supplement to Fr. de Callatay's article, *Réflexions*

¹² Arr. III 16.10: ἀργυρίου τάλαντα ἐς τρισχίλια. Cf. N.G.L. HAMMOND, Alexander the Great, (*supra*, n. 10), pp. 159ff. W.L.T. ADAMS, Antipater and Cassander. Generalship on Restricted Resources in the Fourth Century, *AntWelt* 10, nos. 3-4, 1984, pp. 79ff.

¹³ Cf. also A.B. BOSWORTH, Alexander the Great and the Decline of Macedonia, *JHS* 106, 1986, p. 8.

¹⁴ See F. REBUFFAT, Alexandre le Grand et les problèmes financiers au début de son règne (été 336-printemps 335), *RN* 25, 1983, pp. 43-52.

¹⁵ See N.G.L. HAMMOND, Alexander the Great (*supra*, n. 10), 157 and J. SEIBERT (*supra*, n. 7), p. 839.

¹⁶ Cf. also F. DE CALLATAY, *RBN* 128, 1982, pp. 5-25, on the late beginning of Alexander's coinage (333 BC on).

¹⁷ in: *Mnemosyne* (*supra*, n. 5).

¹⁸ G. LE RIDER, Alexander in Asia Minor, in: *Essays Charles Hersh* (*supra*, n. 6), p. 55.

¹⁹ N.G.L. HAMMOND, Casualties and Reinforcements of Citizen Soldiers in Greece and Macedonia, *JHS* 109, 1989, p. 65.

²⁰ See CH. HERSH and H. TROXELL, A 1993 Hoard of Alexander Drachms from the Near East, *AJN* 5-6, 1993-94.

²¹ in: A. HOUGHTON *et al.*, (eds.), *Festschrift für Leo Mildenberg* (Wetteren 1984), pp. 241-247.

sur les ateliers d'Asie mineure d'Alexandre le Grand,²² we may perhaps introduce another assumption, made by the present reviewer:²³

«It was decided in 325/24 BC only to generalise the practice of making actual payments to soldiers (mercenaries) by extending payment (*misthophora*) to the veterans, although the Macedonian citizen army was, *par excellence*, an army based on the *ethnos*.²⁴

«One question that needs to be investigated, however, is the reason for which it was decided to mint drachms (especially these) in addition to the tetradrachms and staters that had been in circulation for some time and were used mainly to pay the mercenaries, the production of which intensified at the newly opened mints in Asia Minor.²⁵

The behaviour of the Alexander drachms as revealed by the hoards, both mixed and those containing only drachms, is in this case highly interesting. In contrast with the tetradrachms, the drachms occur in hoards from the Greek peninsula at later dates, and even in the final decade of the century (310 BC in Macedonia and Central Greece, 300 BC in Thessaly and the Peloponnese).²⁶

In the overwhelming majority of cases, these issues came from the newly founded mints at Sardis, Miletos, Lampsakos, Magnesia, "Kolophon", "Teos", Mylasa (?), and Abydos (?), which scholarship dates to the period after 325/4 BC,²⁷ and were intended primarily for the 10,000 Macedonian veterans discharged by Alexander at the end of summer 324 BC,

²² Trésors et circulation monétaire en Anatolie antique (Paris 1994), pp. 19-35.

²³ I. TOURATSOGLU, The Price of Power, *Eulimene* 1, 2000 (*supra*, n. 6), pp. 91-118.

²⁴ For this, see Justinus, 11, 1, 10.

²⁵ See the enlightening article by FR. DE CALLATAÏ, Des trésors royaux achéménides au monnayage d'Alexandre. Espèces immobilisées et espèces circulantes, Actes du colloque sur l'or dans l'empire achéménide, Bordeaux, mars 1989, *Rev.d'Et.Anc.* 91, 1989, pp. 259-273 and I.P. TOURATSOGLU, Στην αναζήτηση του έλληνιστικού χρυσού, μεγάλοι άντι μικρών και πλούσιοι έκ πενήτων (Arr. V 27,6). in: ΜΝΕΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ, Τόμος στη μνήμη Μαίρης Σιγανίδου (Thessaloniki 1998), pp. 235-266.

²⁶ Drachms appear in hoards from Thrace and the land of the Getai from the beginning of the last twenty years of the 4th c. BC (the proposed date of deposit of the Mahala find in IGCH is certainly too high).

²⁷ M. THOMPSON, Paying the Mercenaries (*supra*, n. 21), pp. 241-247 (These men were, of course, mercenaries not veterans). FR. DE CALLATAÏ, Réflexions sur les ateliers d'Asie Mineure d'Alexandre le Grand (*supra*, n. 22), pp. 19-35. Y. TOURATSOGLU, Back to the Future (*supra*, n. 6). - M.J. Price, The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus (Zurich/London 1991), who was followed by FR. DE CALLATAÏ, Réflexions, pp. 27-28, CH. HERSH and H. TROXELL, A 1993 Hoard (*supra*, n. 20), pp. 13-42. CH. HERSH, Additions and Corrections to Martin J. Price's 'The Coinage in the Name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus', in: R. ASHTON, S. HURTER (eds.), Studies in Memory of Martin Jessop Price (London 1998), pp. 135-144, and G. LE RIDER, Alexander in Asia Minor (*supra*, n. 18), pp. 49-57 (cf. also G. LE RIDER, SNR 71, 1992, pp. 214-225) were the first to adduce arguments calling into question some of the attributions to specific mints proposed by M. THOMPSON, in: The Alexandrine Mint of Mylasa, NACQT 10, 1981, pp. 207-217, *eadem*, Alexander's Drachm Mints, I Sardis and Miletus, ANSNS 16 (New York 1983) and *eadem*, II, Lampsacus and Abydos, ANSNS 19 (New York 1991), and proceeded to check a number of dates assigned, particularly to the inaugural issues.

after the revolt at Opis,²⁸ and for those who at the end of 321 BC accompanied Antipater, with Philip III and the royal court on their return journey to Macedon.²⁹

«These drachms (and perhaps also a sum in tetradrachms) were presumably intended for the 31,000 mercenaries from South Greece who, in the years following 323 BC, returned to their homes, leaving the newly founded cities of the East where they had been settled by the son of Philip II (about 23,000), or having been discharged by the local Macedonian satraps (8,000).³⁰

Unlike the tetradrachms, the penetration of Macedonia and the rest of Greece by drachms issued in the name of Alexander tended to be somewhat later than their year of issue.

«It is significant for the numismatic policy of Alexander that drachms were preceded in hoards not only by tetradrachms but also by staters. Wherever and whenever the sources refer to the payment of Macedonian veterans or mercenaries, it is normally noted, or may be inferred, that they were paid in silver coins. We do not know how far the various bonuses - normally for discharged soldiers - were paid in gold, or whether certain currency despatches were made only in gold coins. Whatever the case, gold issues in the name of Philip II, Alexander, and Philip III (mainly staters, through more rarely multiples or subdivisions of staters) are found in the Balkans and Greece preeminently in hoards from Macedonia and Thrace. The gold staters discovered in Macedonia come from Chalkidike (Kassandreia) and East Macedonia (Amphipolis, Philippi) and fall into two groups of hoards - one with burial dates in the interval from 325 BC to 323 BC (three hoards) and one from 315 BC to 275 BC (ten hoards), while in Thrace, hoards containing gold staters, which are undoubtedly more numerous than in Macedonia, come from the central and east areas of what is now Bulgaria (kingdom of the Odrysai) and from the east of modern Romania (Getai, Scyths). The Thracian staters fall into two groups, one with burial dates in the period 325-320/319 BC (ten hoards) and the other in the period 315-275 BC (sixteen hoards)³¹.

«The late circulation of the drachms, which was a characteristic feature of the monetary history of the regions in which they have been discovered, is mainly a vivid reflection of the events in the last twenty-five years of the century; it is also a factor of the pronounced mobility that could be observable almost immediately after the death of the warrior-king, as some of the Epigoni attempted to realise their personal ambitions, with movements of

²⁸ Arr. IV 18-19. VII 12,1-2: καὶ οὗτοι αὐτῷ ἐγένοντο ἐς μυρίου. τούτοις δὲ τὴν τε μισθοφορὰν οὐ τοῦ ἐξήκοντος ἤδη χρόνου ἔδωκεν Ἀλέξανδρος μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ἐς τὴν ἀπονόστησιν τὴν οἰκάδε ξυμβαίνοντος. ἐπέδωκεν δὲ καὶ τάλαντον ἐκάστω ὑπὲρ τὴν μισθοφορὰν; Diod. 17 109,2. Cf. N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Alexander's Veterans*, pp. 54-55; *idem*, *the Macedonian State* (*supra*, n. 10), p. 225. One of the reasons for the revolt at Opis was probably the strong discontent of the Macedonians that they had not so far been taken into account in payments - unlike, of course, the Greek and barbarian mercenaries.

²⁹ Diod. 18 39,7: τοὺς βασιλεῖς ἀναλαβόντων (Antipater) καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν προῆγεν ἐπὶ Μακεδονίαν. Cf. N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Alexander's Veterans*, p. 59; *idem*, *The Macedonian State* (*supra*, n. 10), p. 255.

³⁰ Diod. 18 7,2 and 18 9,3. Cf. N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Alexander's Veterans* (*supra*, n. 10), p. 53. - Both Hammond, *Alexander's Veterans*, p. 60 and BOSWORTH, *Macedonian Manpower* (*supra*, n. 7), p. 121, mention the 3,000 revolted Macedonians of Antigonos Monophthalmos, who succeeded by violent methods in 321/320 or 320/319 in securing their dismissal and permission to return to Macedonia (see Polyain., 4, 6, 6).

³¹ See Y. TOURATSOGLOU, *Back to the Future* (*supra*, n. 6) and *idem*, in: ΜΝΕΙΑΣ ΧΑΡΙΝ (*supra*, n. 25).

armies (mainly Macedonians, though also mercenaries) which went back and forth, as well as in circles. Movements that seem to have led to a tidal wave of money in the single direction of the Asia Minor coast. For events themselves involved a centrifugal tendency of interests in the direction of Asia.³²

«One result of this uncertainty and fluid climate is the fact that for the period between the Lamian War and the battle of Krannon (322 BC) and the final domination by Antigonos Monophthalmos and his son Demetrios Poliorketes (302 BC) - primarily a period of realignments of power in the Balkans, with Kassander, Lysimachos and Demetrios Poliorketes taking turns as masters of the situation, and forming moving targets between East and West, North and South - the hoards from south and north Greece are rather few, the drachms they contain being confined to a limited number of issues from the early years of their circulation.

«After the decisive battle at Ipsos in Phrygia (301 BC), in contrast, and stabilisation of the situation and to some extent also the balance of forces in the multi-ethnic states wrested from the once mighty Achaemenid empire, the Balkan peninsula, and particularly Greece, was converted into a field of fierce military conflicts of a centripetal character.

One result of this intense conflict is that hoards containing drachms in the name of Alexander from south and north Greece are distinctly more numerous throughout the entire third century BC than those of the previous period, and have distinctly larger numbers of specimens. A characteristic feature is that despite their late concealment, the drachms contained in these hoards, which come almost exclusively from mints in Asia Minor, were issues both of the beginning of the last twenty five years of the 4th c. BC (the minority) and of the years 319-300 BC onwards (the majority).³³ This observation, taken together with what we have seen in the immediately preceding period, might possibly suggest that these "Alexander drachms" of the 3rd c. BC hoards - struck in the 4th c. BC - represent late imports of money from the Orient, primarily accompanying the mercenary bands that fought in Greece under the orders of the protagonists of the period, rather than already existing wealth already in the hands of locals, even in the form of the remains of pay.

«The study of a number of newly found hoards together with those analysed in the past, indicates the leading role played by drachms in the name of Alexander, preeminently as a means of exercising a policy of domination by fire and the sword, in the third century before Christ - the century of mercenaries and fortune-seekers, of the conflicting aspirations of reckless thrones, and of weary veterans of the campaign in Asia.»³⁴

³² For example, the 6,000 Macedonians (part of the 10,000), transferred at Krateros's orders from Kilikia to European territory to reinforce Antipater in Thessaly before the battle of Krannon (322 BC), and later moved forwards to meet the Aetolians (322/321 BC) were ultimately obliged to return to Asia for further adventures (cf. N.G.L. HAMMOND, *The Macedonian State*, pp. 248ff.). Cf. also R. BILLOWS (*supra*, n. 7), pp. 184ff.

³³ GLR (JS 1986, pp. 27-28) arrives at a similar conclusion about the presence of Alexander tetradrachms and drachms struck in 301-294 BC in hoards from Asia Minor with burial dates in the decade 240-230 BC (cf. also G. LE RIDER, *Sur le frai de certaines monnaies anciennes et contemporaines*, *Mélanges offerts à André Tuilier*, pp. 77ff.).

³⁴ GLR's comment (JS 1986, 27) on the circulation of Alexander drachms in Asia Minor «au IIIe siècle, en Asie Mineure et dans l'Orient séleucide, lorsque les transactions comportaient un paiement en drachmes, celles-ci étaient dans leur très grande majorité des monnaies aux types d'Alexandre» is not completely confirmed for Greece, with regard neither to the number of hoards, nor with the number of coins of this category they contain. In Greece at this period, not a few hoards also contain issues of the cities; see Y.

III Macedonia: the Motherland

It is reasonable to ask what kind and category of coins were minted in Macedonia in the period between Alexander's ascent to the throne (336 BC) and his departure for Asia Minor (334 BC). GLR correctly asserts that the young leader continued to produce silver and gold coins in the name of his father. To the beginning of his reign and prior to his adventure in Asia, must belong the apparently small issue of tetradrachms and of drachms with an eagle on the reverse.³⁵ It does not seem likely to the present reviewer that the 'Zeus/eagle' coins could have been minted «plus tard par les soins d'Antipatros, juste après la mort d'Alexandre».³⁶

The evidence provided by hoards does not prove that the gold and silver of Philip circulated regularly in Asia Minor. It is thus reasonable to presume, as is asserted by GLR, that the various and many needs of the Macedonian army up until the issue of the first tetradrachms of Attic standard, after November 333 BC, had to be dealt with, obviously not without some risk, by the expected flow of money from the enemy or from the contributions of the liberated Greek cities in Asia Minor.

In fact, «the quantities of precious metals, in the form of coins, unminted gold and silver, or even in objects referred to in the sources as occupier's trophies of the advancing Macedonian army into the depths of the Persian land, were by no means insignificant. On the contrary, they came in unprecedented quantities. Even though the occupation of Sardis in the summer of 334 BC constituted Alexander's first gallant attempt at solving the acute economic problem he had been facing even before the landing in Asia Minor, what followed was beyond all expectation. In addition to the 50 talents that Aspendos was forced to pay as punishment and the 200 talents from Soli following the events in Damascus in November 333, 2,600 talents found their way to the royal treasury in the form of silver coins (approximately four million tetradrachms' worth) and 500 talents in silver. An influx of money was also achieved with the sale of 3,000 citizens of Tyre as slaves (332 BC). However, the really large quantities were to follow: after the events at Arbela, in October of 331 BC, 3,000 talents in silver coins; at Susa, in the fall of 331, 40,000 talents of unminted gold and silver, and 9,000 talents in Darics; after the events at Persepolis, in the winter of 331/330, 120,000 talents of unminted gold and silver, and, after Pasargades, in the same winter, 6,000 talents.»³⁷

TOURATSOGLU, *Back to the Future* (*supra*, n. 6). Cf. also FR. DE CALLATAÏ, *Un trésor de drachmes aux types d'Alexandre le Grand conservé au Cabinet des Médailles à Bruxelles*, RBN 129, 1983, pp. 23-60.

³⁵ See most recently U. WARTENBERG, *The Alexander-Eagle Hoard: Thessaly 1992*, NC 157, 1997, pp. 179-188 who, however, makes no attempt at dating.

³⁶ G. LE RIDER, *Histoire économique et monétaire de l'Orient hellénistique*, *Annuaire du Collège de France 1995-1996* (Paris 1996), p. 834.

³⁷ I.P. TOURATSOGLU in: ΜΝΕΙΑΣ ΧΑΠΙΝ (*supra*, n. 25). Cf. also R. KNAPOWSKI, *Die Finanzen Alexander's des Grossen*, in: FR. ALTHEIM, R. STIEHL (eds.), *Geschichte Mittelasiens im Altertum* (Berlin 1970), pp. 235-247 and FR. HOLT, *Alexander the Great and the Spoils of War*, *Ancient Macedonia VI/1* (Thessaloniki 1999), pp. 499-506.

IV The East: a New World

Contrary to M. Price's assertions, most recently expressed in *The Coinage of Alexander*, it would seem that for a long time after 331/330 BC, when the town was seized by Alexander, the mint of Babylon, under the direction of Mazaeos, issued only silver tetradrachms (the so-called «lion coins») of Attic standard, and double and simple gold darics. While the minting of the lion tetradrachms and imitations thereof did not stop at Mazaeos's death in 328/327 BC, the gold coins were issued even after 323 BC. Harpalos, the γαζοφύλαξ, may have been responsible for producing them in Babylonia from 330 until 325 BC.³⁸ At the same time, imitations of Athenian tetradrachms were issued in some unknown area in Babylonia during Alexander's lifetime.

In any event, even though Alexander remained in the areas between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers for about six years, it does not appear that he set up new mints there for striking of staters and tetradrachms in his name. This may be explained by the fact that in these areas the concept of currency in the form of coinage was unknown to the local population, since coins that ended up there were used solely as amounts of precious metal.

Accordingly, the production of royal coins at Babylon must have begun after 326 BC, or even 325, as GLR correctly asserts. They were gold staters and silver tetradrachms with a few dekadrachms, all of the usual type. However, the so-called «Poros dekadrachms» of Poros and «tetradrachms of the Indian archers», of Attic weight, pose a problem both in terms of their date and in terms of their attribution to a specific mint in Babylonia or in the area east of the Tigris. In discussing the certainly problematic composition of the 1973 hoard from the surroundings of Babylon,³⁹ GLR considers the particular issues, probably the products of the Babylon mint, to be later than June 323 BC, thus opposing the view that they were minted during Alexander's lifetime, as Price had suggested. GLR accepts the theory of R.J. Lane Fox who thinks that the coins were produced at Susa.⁴⁰ In P. Bernard's opinion the Poros dekadrachms and the archer tetradrachms are the work of Eudamus,⁴¹ satrap of the area of the Punjab (318/317 BC) and «leader of the elephants».⁴² W. Hollstein, however, proposes that the prince Taxiles is responsible for minting these coins, a view supported by the poor technical quality of the coins and the absence of Alexander's name thereon.⁴³

In an admittedly interesting book, whose contents, however, could easily have been condensed to the length of an article,⁴⁴ Fr. Holt goes extensively

³⁸ Apparently Babylon was not the only mint which produced double darics. GLR suggests there were centres in Arachosia and Bactriana.

³⁹ M. PRICE, Circulation at Babylon in 323 B.C., in: *Mnemata* (see note 5), pp. 69-72.

⁴⁰ R.J. LANE FOX, Text and Image: Alexander the Great, coins and elephants, *Bull.Inst.-Class.Studies* 41, 1996, pp. 87-108.

⁴¹ P. BERNARD, Le monnayage d'Eudamos, satrape grec du Pandjab et maître des éléphants, *Orientalia Josephi Tucci Memoriae dicata* (Rome 1985), pp. 65-94.

⁴² Plutarch, *Eumenes*, 16,3.

⁴³ W. HOLLSTEIN, «Taxiles» Prägung für Alexander den Grossen, *SNR* 68, 1989, pp. 5-17.

⁴⁴ FR. HOLT, *Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2003).

through, *inter alia*, the international bibliography on the subject and reaches the following conclusion after a detailed study of all the recommendations: the dekadrachms, unique in terms of illustration, and the accompanying tetradrachms must have been minted in small quantities and under less than ideal conditions from the point of minting as well as weight between 326 and 324 B.C., in other words, between the battle at the river Hydaspis and the return of the expedition army to Babylon.⁴⁵ In Holt's view (p. 147) these coins constitute special editions «for veterans of the Indian campaign, no doubt authorised by Alexander and produced as best as could be managed on the road in the East, then carried back to Mesopotamia. They were simply not intended to be circulating coins of the usual imperial varieties, but rather as rare commemorative medallions, or *aristeia*, valuable rewards for distinguished military service».⁴⁶ They would have been used, if not during the games that took place in the recently founded cities of Boucephala and Nikaia⁴⁷ in the area of the last battle, then at least during the festivities that followed in Babylon.

If Holt's radical approach is valid, and it would appear to be so for many reasons, then Bernard's view regarding posthumous minting with a thematic reference, in part anyway, to a «culte militaire» which (*apud* GLR, pp. 332-333) «aurait put être implanté, à des fins politiques, dans l'armée qui stationnait à ce moment-là sur les bords de l'Euphrate et du Tigre», does not make sense.

In fact, this argument raises the point that such a theory fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for the presence of the images on the sides of the dekadrachms. These images are related to the reason, which is a great earthly victory, and to the result, which is the deification of the victor.

«... it was [namely] the silver issues corresponding with five [and two shekels] struck in Babylon or, more likely, Susa in the period 326-323 BC, or more precisely in 324-323 BC, that clearly proclaimed the new *ethos* through their obverse and reverse representations. Not only did these coins immortalize a historic moment in a manner preeminently that of narrative epic - in the scene of the confrontation between Poros and the Macedonian - but

⁴⁵ O. MØRKHOLM, *Early Hellenistic Coinage* (Cambridge/New York 1991), pp. 52-54 as well as N.G.L. HAMMOND, *Alexander the Great* (*supra*, n. 10), p. 216, and A. STEWART, *Faces of Power. Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford 1993), p. 48, W. VÖLKER-JANSSEN, *Kunst und Gesellschaft an den Höfen Alexanders d.Gr. und seiner Nachfolger* (München 1993), p. 146 and BILLOWS (*supra*, n. 7), p. 27 support the view that these coins were struck during Alexander's lifetime.

⁴⁶ Although O. MØRKHOLM (see previous n.), p. 53 points out that the weights of these coins did not seem to follow the Attic standard («the weights of the tetradrachms are quite irregular and fall well behind the Attic standard»), he maintains that they could have been issued at the Susa mint, which probably began to operate around 323 BC. He thinks they were produced with a view to Alexander's intense interest «in celebrating his eastern campaign after his return to Persia and Mesopotamia in 324, when games and festivals were arranged in order to wipe out the memory of the appalling march through the Carmanian desert». A.B. BOSWORTH, *The Indian Campaigns, 327-325 BC*, in: J. ROISMAN (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great* (Leiden/London 2003), p. 165, attributes the dekadrachms and tetradrachms to the mint of Babylon during the king's lifetime.

⁴⁷ BOSWORTH, *The Indian Campaigns* (n. 46), 165.

on the reverse they embodied the metaphysical ritual, conducted somewhere between reality and myth, of the triumphant deification of the victor outside space and time. Fully equipped with conventional human-scale arms (spear and sword) but also with a divine weapon (the thunderbolt), the victor was both the triumphant warrior and supreme political leader.»⁴⁸

The background to this glorification and deification may be sought in the Egypt of 331 BC, at the oracle of Siwa, or in the Bactria of 327 BC, during the *proskynesis* episode. Nevertheless, its actual attested realization, accompanied by its reflection in the iconographic record, thanks to Alexander himself, could only have taken place in a favourable environment, such as India. Many examples of the new coins are overstruck, which indicates haste in production. However, the unprecedented triumphalistic iconography, whereby *hubris* is rendered as a quasi-divine ἑπαθλον at the end of a titanic effort on the fringes of the inhabited world show that the act was also deliberate.

V Mints: Certainty and Ambiguity

With regard to the intricate and complex question of the attribution of Alexander's Macedonian tetradrachms, these have in the past been grouped depending on the symbols on their reverse in three series (series 1-3: Head of Heracles/ Enthroned Zeus), whilst the so-called fourth series depicts an eagle. The three series can be attributed, with varying degrees of certainty, to two or even three mints at Pella, Amphipolis and Aegae.

A small sample from the coins was analysed by means of energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence and offered some interesting information.⁴⁹ «Bismuth appears to be one of the most important elements related with the original type of the ore, especially when correlated with the copper and silver content». Furthermore, «bismuth is a good parent ore indicator for silver coins and high bismuth content may be indicative of a bismuth rich ore». Thus the following conclusions arise.

(a) The analysis of the elements of some of the tetradrachms examined, regarding which Price's and Troxell's opinions differ as to whether they belonged to the mint of Pella (Price, *Alexander*, issue 243), showed that these coins most probably originated from the mint of Amphipolis.

(b) Price thinks that his issue *Alexander* 57 may not have originated at Amphipolis, whilst Troxell is sure it did. However, it should now probably be attributed to another mint.

⁴⁸ I. TOURATSOGLU, *The Alexander of the Coins*, The Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation (Nicosia 2000), pp. 62-63.

⁴⁹ See N. KALLITHRAKAS-KONTOS, A.A. KATSANOS, J. TOURATSOGLU, *Trace Elements Analysis of Alexander the Great's Silver Tetradrachms minted in Macedonia*, NIM B 171, 2000, pp. 342-349. M. KALLITHRAKAS-KONTOS, A. KATSANOS, G. VLAMAKI, I. TOURATSOGLU, *Composition and Origin of Alexander the Great's Tetradrachms*, *Obo-los* 4, 2000, pp. 39-345.

(c) Finally, a Babylon tetradrachm, included in this group, is rich in bismuth, a characteristic of the Amphipolis mint.

VI Conclusions: Beyond the Illusion; beyond Vanity?

« Il semble bien qu'il faille renoncer à prêter à Alexandre l'ambition de créer une 'monnaie d'empire', car il n'imposa pas l'usage de ses tetradrachmes d'argent ni de ses statères d'or dans les immenses territoires conquis. Les provinces orientales à l'est du Tigre restèrent dépourvues d'atelier monétaire. En revanche, la tradition littéraire souligne qu'il utilisa au cours de ses dix ans de campagnes les espèces accumulées dans les trésors du dernier roi achéménide, en particulier les dariques d'or. Les statères d'argent frappés sous le règne par Balacros en Cilicie (Tarse) ou par Mazdai à Babylone n'ont guère de point commun avec la monnaie de type macédonien. Il est probable aussi qu'une quantité de tétradrachmes pseudo-athéniens continuèrent à circuler, en partie produits, peut-être, en Babylonie. Si l'aboutissement de cette politique tolérante - la frappe de deux monnayages distincts, l'un, macédonien, destiné aux régions occidentales du royaume, l'autre, constitué de nouvelles monnaies d'or et d'argent convenant mieux aux transactions dans la partie orientale - est postérieur à la mort prématurée d'Alexandre, l'idée était en germe dans ses initiatives monétaires toujours adaptées aux conditions locales, aux circonstances et aux imprévus de la conquête ».

This conclusion, by Hélène Nicolet-Pierre,⁵⁰ was also reached by GLR, although the argumentation is dated and the issue has been adequately analysed in the past. Such a confirmation, apart from the economic and numismatic dimensions that it possesses, is to be viewed in the general light of the policy of fusion. This characterized the later deeds of the young visionary Alexander. He was a young dreamer, completely alone in the midst of his universal ideals, in a dangerous no-man's land between the severe Olympian austerity of the Classical and the Dionysiac inspiration of approaching Hellenism.

* * *

GLR's recently published book is a major addition to his whole invaluable œuvre on Alexander, and it most certainly offers a complete exploration of the structure of Alexander's economic and numismatic policy, something hitherto missing from the international bibliography on the topic. Nevertheless, the book would have been even more complete and useful, had a bibliography, albeit only a select bibliography, been included.

Finally, there is the question of the illustration of the book cover, which depicts Alexander on the triumphant chariot as another Louis XIV from the later Baroque. Such a picture certainly makes clear the impact this earthly god has had throughout the course of history, thereby setting an example for later leaders. However, this dimension goes beyond the scope of the book and could easily mislead the unwary reader.

Dr. I.P. Touratsoglou
c/o Numismatic Museum
GR-106 82 Athens

⁵⁰ H. NICOLET-PIERRE, *Numismatique grèque* (Paris 2002), p. 210.