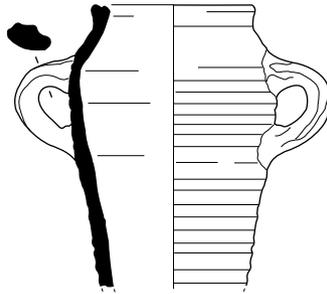


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Ancient Armenian Coins: the Artaxiad Dynasty (189 BC - AD 6)

Jack Nurpetlian

Abstract

The Artaxiad Dynasty of Armenia ruled during the first two centuries BC and issued royal coinage both in silver and bronze. In 1978, Paul Z. Bedoukian was the first to publish a comprehensive study of these coins in his book Coinage of the Artaxiads of Armenia (hereafter CAA). Since the publication of his treatise, new information and publications have appeared in the numismatic world. These still remain scattered in various journals and are written in different languages. The present article is a collection of all the data and a re-evaluation of the material published to date, altogether presented in a single comprehensive body of work. Consequently, an attempt has been made to provide new insight into these coins and new interpretations regarding the attribution, chronology, metrology, mints, circulation and classification of the coinage.

Keywords Artaxiad rulers, coin attribution and revision, circulation and mints

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the Persian period Armenia was the 13th province of the Achaemenid Empire.¹ The Orontids, who had close ties with the Persians, were the ruling dynasty in Armenia.² After the conquests of Alexander the Great, Armenia fell under the Hellenistic sphere of influence; however the Seleucids were unable to establish direct rule over Armenian lands. With the help of Antiochus III (223 - 187 BC), a local dynast with the name Artaxias was able to overthrow the last ruler of the Orontid Dynasty and become the *Strategos* of Armenia ca 200 BC.³ When Antiochus the Great was defeated by the Romans in the battle of Magnesia in 189 BC, Artaxias seized the

opportunity and declared himself independent and gradually expanded his territories on all sides.⁴ In the subsequent Treaty of Apamea (188 BC), Artaxias was recognized as the ruler of Armenia by the Roman Senate. He founded Artaxata as the new capital city on the Araxes River (Figure 1).⁵ Artaxias I was succeeded by his son Artavasdes I (160 - 123 BC),⁶ who had to fight against Mithridates II of Parthia. Although the Armenian king managed to repel the Parthian incursions, his nephew Tigranes (later to become Tigranes the Great) was taken hostage.⁷ The following period in the succession of the kings is not clear, but it is believed that Artavasdes was succeeded by his brother Tigranes I (123 - 96 BC), who also fought the Parthians.⁸

¹ Herodotus *Histories* 3.93.

² Toumanoff 1963, 293-294.

³ Strabo *Geography* 11.14.5.

⁴ *Ibid*; Polybius *Histories* 25.2. The exact borders of Armenia are difficult to determine. The boundaries were often in a state of fluctuation due to military campaigns and political wrangling.

⁵ Plutarch *Lucullus* 31.3.

⁶ The succession dates of the kings are based on the work of Manandian 1944 (in Armenian). For the history of this period written in English, refer to Lang 1980.

⁷ Justin *Epitome* 38.3, 42.2; Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15.

⁸ Strabo *Geography* 16.1.19; Appian *Syrian wars* 48.

Upon the death of the Armenian king, Tigranes II (95 - 55 BC) reached an agreement with his captors allowing him to ascend the Armenian throne by giving in return '70 valleys' near the borders of Media.⁹ Tigranes II, known as the Great, managed to organize his resources and expand his territories rapidly by first acquiring the kingdom of Sophene, followed by an attack on Cappadocia.¹⁰ Soon he managed to conquer Gordyene, Adiabene and Cilicia. He then subjugated Commagene and retook the surrendered valleys from Parthia along with some parts of northern Mesopotamia.¹¹ Subsequently, taking advantage of the turmoil within the Parthian dynasty, he declared himself 'King of Kings'.¹² By 83 BC Antioch was acquired partly by conquest and partly due to an 'invitation' by the Antiochene nobility to relieve themselves of the chaos ensuing from the disintegration of the Seleucid Dynasty.¹³ In the late 70s BC, Tigranes was preoccupied with campaigns to the south of Syria in the regions of Phoenicia and Palestine.¹⁴ Tigranes founded Tigranocerta and had it settled with the inhabitants of Cilicia, Gordyene, Adiabene and Cappadocia.¹⁵ The new capital was located in the geographic center of his empire as Artaxata was now too far from his expanding territories to the south and west. The expansionist maneuvers of Tigranes had no doubt been of concern to the Romans, who by now were playing a greater role in the eastern Mediterranean. The main antagonism between Rome and Armenia was sparked when Mithridates VI of Pontus (Tigranes' father-in-law), fleeing from Lucullus' invading forces, took refuge in Armenia. Upon

Tigranes refusal to extradite Mithridates, Lucullus marched on Tigranocerta in 69 BC and managed to capture the city and plunder 8,000 talents.¹⁶ During the ensuing months, the joint forces of Tigranes and Mithridates resorted to sporadic attacks against the Romans, but neither side made any significant advances.¹⁷ The following year Lucullus decided to attack the capital Artaxata. Despite the initial victory of Lucullus, the Armenians were saved from destruction due to a mutiny in the Roman ranks and the eventual recall of the Roman general to Rome.¹⁸

The Roman Senate had now replaced Lucullus with Pompey, who marched on Armenia and was more successful in both his military and political tactics. The Armenian king was in a difficult position; he had been weakened by Lucullus' campaigns in addition to his son's treachery.¹⁹ Under these circumstances, Tigranes II had no choice but to submit to the new Roman general and accept his terms of surrender in 66 BC. Tigranes, who had to pay 6,000 talents in tribute, was to remain the ruler of Armenia proper and continue using the title King of Kings; however his conquered territories were relinquished to Rome.²⁰ Armenia was now to play the role of a buffer state between west and east for decades to come, at times allying with Rome but often siding with the Parthians.

Tigranes was succeeded by his son Artavasdes II (55 - 34 BC),²¹ who was caught between the battles of Crassus and king Orodes II of Parthia (57 - 38 BC). Artavasdes, in accordance with his father's alliance with Rome, sided with the Roman general and advised him to invade Parthia

⁹ Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15.

¹⁰ Justin *Epitome* 38.3; Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15. He was later ousted from Cappadocia by Sulla in 92 BC (Plutarch *Sulla* 5.3).

¹¹ Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15.

¹² Appian *Syrian wars* 48.

¹³ Justin *Epitome* 40.1.

¹⁴ Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15; Josephus (*Jewish antiquities* 13.16.4 and *The Jewish war* 1.5.3) states that Tigranes besieged and captured Ake-Ptolemais. Appian (*Syrian wars* 48) states that Tigranes II conquered the territories west of the Euphrates as far as Egypt.

¹⁵ Strabo *Geography* 12.2.9; Plutarch *Lucullus* 21.3, 26.1.

¹⁶ Details of the confrontation between Tigranes and Lucullus are documented in Plutarch *Lucullus* 19.1, 21.7, 26.1, 29.1-3 and Appian *Mithridatic wars* 82, 84.

¹⁷ Appian *Mithridatic wars* 87.

¹⁸ Dio Cassius *Roman history* 36. 4-5, 14. Plutarch *Lucullus* 31.2-8, 32.2.

¹⁹ This 'Tigranes the Younger' had first revolted against his father with the help of the Parthians and later sided with Pompey (Dio Cassius *Roman history* 36.52; Appian *Mithridatic wars* 104).

²⁰ Plutarch *Pompey* 33; Dio Cassius *Roman history* 36.52; Appian *Mithridatic wars* 104.

²¹ Dio Cassius *Roman history* 40.16.2.

from the north through Armenia, a terrain he knew well. Crassus, having set his eyes on Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, preferred to march southward through Mesopotamia, but was soon bogged down by heavy rains and marshy terrain, factors which compromised his army. The Roman troops were under attack and Artavasdes II, himself under attack by the Parthians, abstained from aiding the Romans.²² These two issues resulted in the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae in 53 BC. Artavasdes now allied himself with the Parthians and secured his alliance by offering his sister's hand in marriage to Orodes' son. Crassus' head was displayed at the wedding ceremony in Artaxata.²³ After Crassus' defeat, the Armeno-Parthian alliance was to last for several years.

By 39/38 BC internal disorder within the Parthian dynasty allowed Mark Antony to gain ground in the region. In 37 BC, Artavasdes had to ally with the Roman general and aid him in the invasion of Parthia by providing the Romans a mustering point in Armenia. During the initial phases of the battle, Antony's troops were defeated, as a result of which Artavasdes drew his forces back to Armenia. Although Antony had made several gains later on during his battles with the Parthians, his advances were ineffectual. In 34 BC Antony called the retreat and, blaming the Armenians for their defeat, his forces were now redirected against Armenia.²⁴ Artavasdes II was tricked into coming to Antony's camp, where he was kidnapped and held for ransom. The Armenian nobility refused to pay and took to arms by appointing Artavasdes' eldest son Artaxias II as the king of Armenia in 34 BC. At first, Artaxias II fought the Romans, but was soon defeated and escaped to Parthia.²⁵ After occupying and looting Armenia, Antony returned to Egypt where he paraded Artavasdes and his family in the triumph. Soon after, Artavasdes II was killed

and his two sons Tigranes (III) and Artavasdes (III) were imprisoned. Alexander, the 6 year old son of Antony and Cleopatra, was appointed king of Armenia, Media and Parthia, although he most probably served as a titular king.²⁶

After the defeat of Antony by Augustus in 31 BC, Artaxias II was established as the rightful heir of the Armenian throne and ruled from 30 - 20 BC.²⁷ At first Augustus did not intervene in Armenia's affairs, but once the emperor had reorganized his empire, he consolidated his political power in the east by negotiating with Phraates IV (38 - 2 BC) of Parthia and secured the return of the army standards that Crassus had lost. Taking advantage of Rome's new settlement, the pro-Roman Armenians managed to assassinate Artaxias, paving the way for Tigranes III (who was being kept in Rome) to become king of Armenia in 20 BC.²⁸

Tigranes III ruled for 12 years until 8 BC. Although at first he was an ally of Rome, it is believed that he became pro-Parthian during the end of his reign.²⁹ Upon his death, his son Tigranes IV was appointed king without Rome's consent. Augustus was not happy with the new developments in Armenia and the Roman forces, under the leadership of Tiberius, were dispatched to Armenia and were successful in appointing Artavasdes III in 5 BC.³⁰

The new pro-Roman king also did not reign long since in ca 2 BC, due to an illness, he died.³¹ During this period Rome and Parthia were on peaceful terms. In an agreement between Gaius and Phraataces (2 BC - AD), Armenia was to be put under Rome's sphere of influence. As a result of these new political agreements, and upon the death of Artavasdes III, Tigranes IV sent Augustus gifts and petitioned for the kingship. Augustus agreed and arrangements were made for Tigranes to receive his crown from Gaius in

²² Plutarch *Crassus* 19.1, 22.2. Dio Cassius (*Roman history* 40.16.2) states that the Parthians deliberately attacked the Armenians on a second front to prevent Artavasdes from aiding the Romans.

²³ Plutarch *Crassus* 33.

²⁴ Plutarch *Antonius* 37.3, 39.1, 50.1-4; Dio Cassius *Roman history* 49.25-26.

²⁵ Dio Cassius *Roman history* 49.39.

²⁶ Ibid, 49.40-41, 51.16; Plutarch *Antonius* 54.4.

²⁷ Tacitus *Annales* 2.3; Dio Cassius *Roman history* 49.44, 51.16.2.

²⁸ Dio Cassius *Roman history* 54.9.4-5; Tacitus *Annales* 2.3; *Res Gestae* 27.

²⁹ CAA, 31-33.

³⁰ Tacitus *Annales* 2.3-4. Paterculus *Roman history* 2.94.4.

Syria. However, Tigranes IV died in AD 1 during an offensive against barbarians on the northern borders of Armenia. Erato, Tigranes IV's sister/queen, renounced the throne soon after the Armenian king's death.³²

Rome decided to appoint a non-Artaxiad king in Armenia by choosing Ariobarzanes, the son of Artabanus king of Media Atropatene, as the new ruler in AD 2.³³ This instigated a rebellion by the Armenians, but Gaius managed to quell the revolt and Ariobarzanes was appointed king of Armenia.³⁴ Ariobarzanes died in AD 4 and was succeeded by his son Artavasdes (IV). This instigated a second rebellion, which resulted in the foreign king's assassination in AD 6.³⁵

Augustus' policy of appointing foreign pro-Roman rulers in Armenia was not successful. He was left with no choice but to assign a prince "who was sprung from the royal family of the Armenians"³⁶ to the throne. Thus Tigranes V, who was "a grandson of Herod the Great, son

of Alexander and Glaphyra, daughter of the Cappadocian king, Archelaus, whose first wife was in all probability of the Armenian royal house,"³⁷ was appointed in AD 6. However, it seems that the Armenians did not approve of the new king's rule since, according to Tacitus, he was impeached and spent the rest of his life in Rome, where he died in AD 36.³⁸ It is said that Erato ruled after Tigranes V's death, but this also does not seem to have lasted long.³⁹

It was under these circumstances that the Artaxiad Dynasty came to an end during the first decade of the first century AD. The following years saw Armenia again caught between the two empires, with each side outbidding the other for territorial claims and appointing rulers to suit their aims. This remained the case until AD 53 when the Arsacids became the ruling dynasty of Armenia and remained in power for four centuries, outlasting their parent line in Parthia.

³¹ Dio Cassius *Roman history* 55.10.20. Tacitus (*Annales* 2.4) states that Artavasdes III was deposed from the throne.

³² Dio Cassius *Roman history* 55.10a.4-5 and 55.10.20-21.

³³ Tacitus *Annales* 2.4; *Res Gestae* 27; Dio Cassius *Roman history* 55.10a.5.

³⁴ Dio Cassius *Roman history* 55.10a.6-7.

³⁵ Tacitus *Annales* 2.4; *Res Gestae* 27; Dio Cassius *Roman history* 55.10a.7.

³⁶ *Res Gestae* 27.

³⁷ Anderson 1934, 277. Reference to this Herodian Tigranes can also be found in Josephus *The Jewish war* 1.28.1.

³⁸ Tacitus *Annales* 6.40.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.4. The historical information regarding the later Artaxiads is inconsistent and the succession dates are unclear.

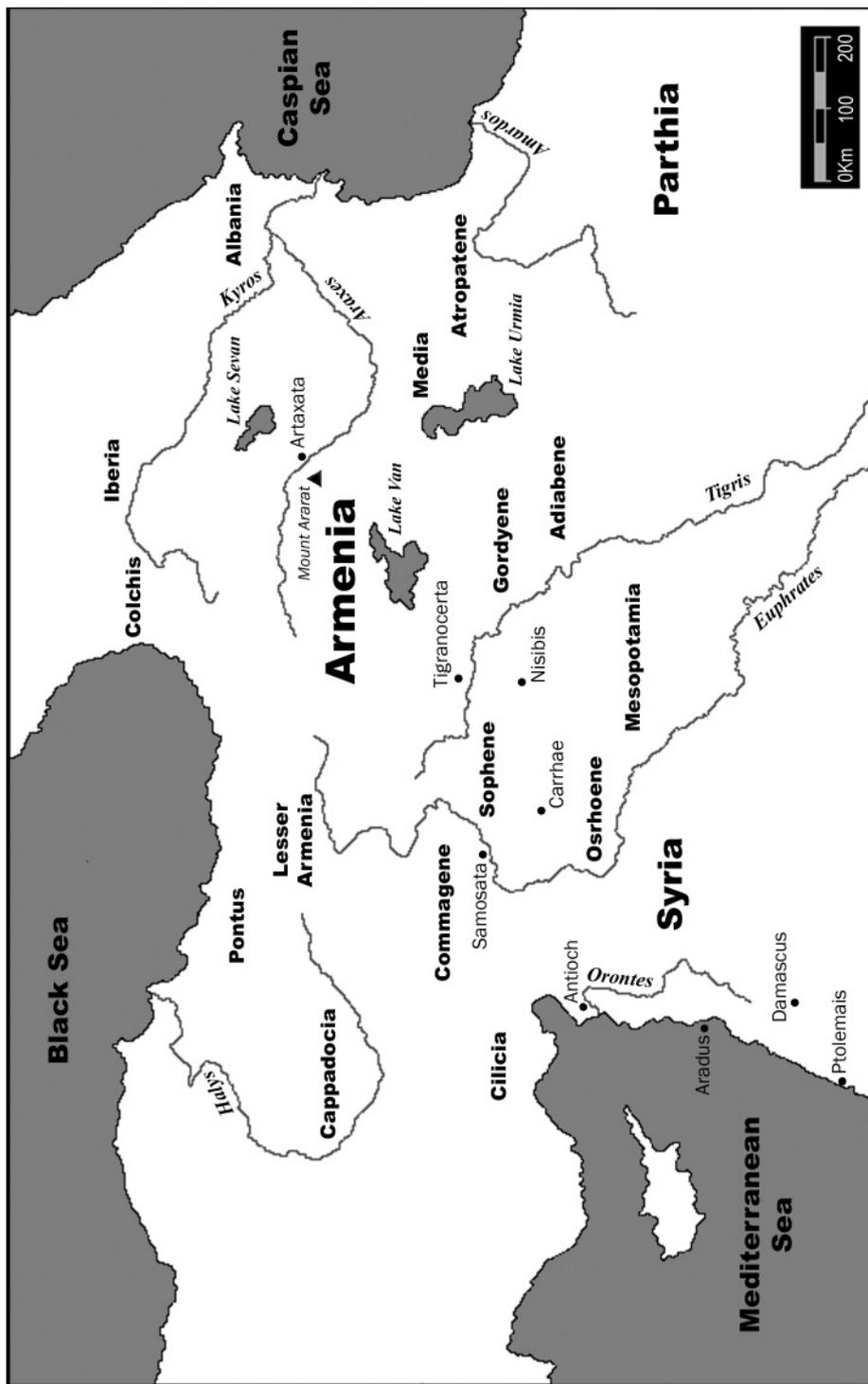
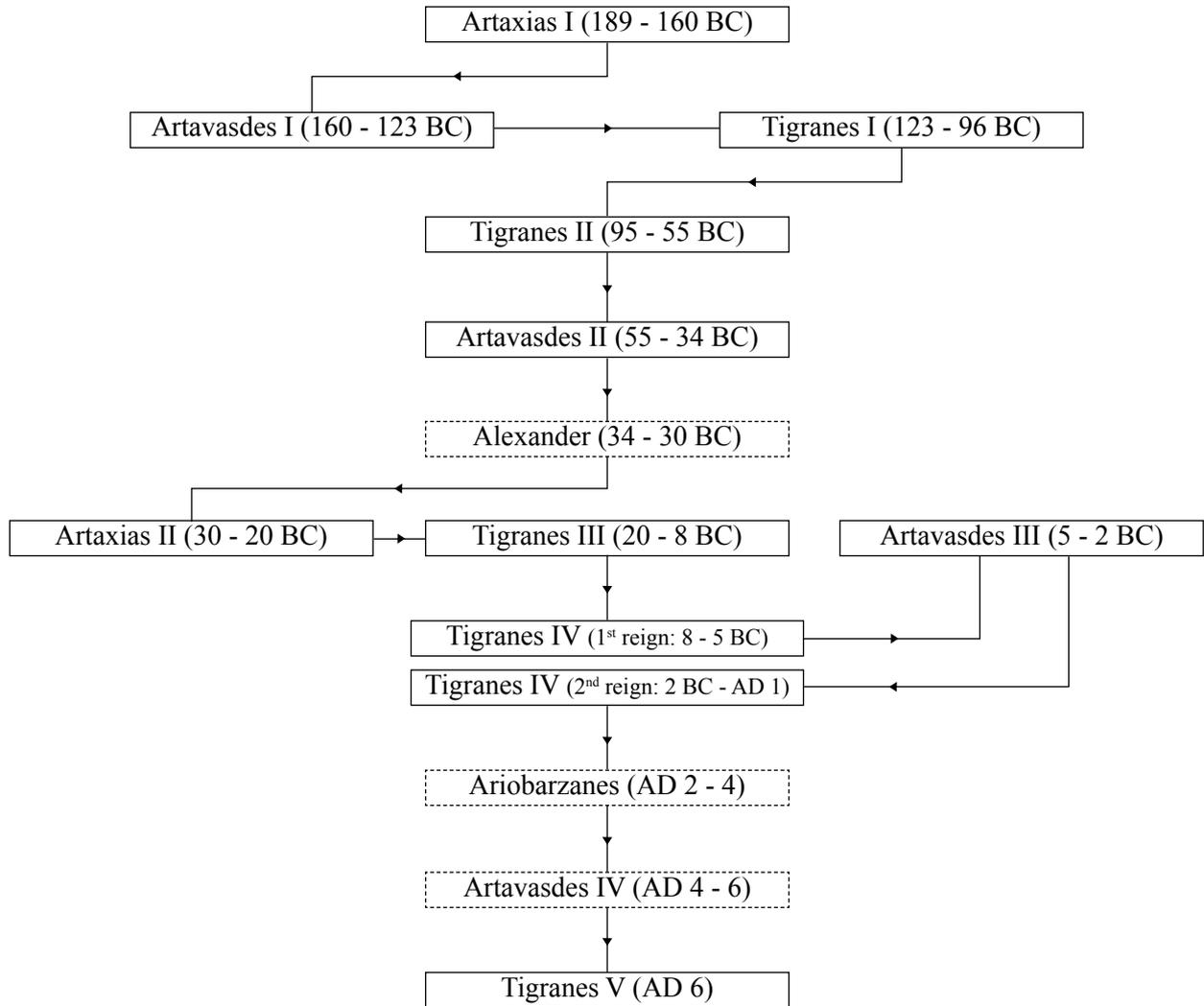


Figure 1 Map of historical Armenia and surrounding regions.

Succession Table of
The Artaxiad Dynasty of Armenia⁴⁰



⁴⁰ Vertically placed boxes show father-to-son succession, whereas horizontal boxes indicate brother-to-brother

succession. Boxes with dashed borders represent non-Artaxiad rulers.

THE COINS

The Artaxiad dynasty issued coins both in silver and bronze, but no gold coins have yet been attested.⁴¹ The distinctive feature on Artaxiad coins is the tiara worn as a head gear by the kings. This ‘Armenian tiara’ is invariably adorned with a star, which is sometimes flanked by one or two eagles and in some cases by floral or geometric designs.⁴²

Artaxias I (189 - 160 BC)

There are no coins attributed to this king.

Artavasdes I (160 - 123 BC)

No coins have been attributed to this king.

Tigranes I (123 - 96 BC)

On the coins attributed to Tigranes I the king’s portrait is depicted facing left. According to Bedoukian, because the style of these coins is crude, they reflect an early period, and therefore he attributes them to Tigranes I.⁴³ These coins have two different legends: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ. There are four types listed for this king:

- **Tree** (coin no. 1): On this type there exists the Greek letter I in the left field and ζ in the right. This type is often countermarked with the letters APK on the obverse.

- **Zeus** seated left holding a wreath in his right hand and a long scepter in his left (no. 2). The Greek letter Λ can be found in the left field of some specimens of this type. It is also worth noting that this type has a square legend.

- **Standing figure** wearing a long tunic, left hand holding an eagle and right hand a long scepter or spear (no. 3). It is unclear if the figure represents the king or a warrior.

- **Nike** standing right holding a wreath in her left hand (no. 4). A second variety of this type was later recorded depicting Nike holding a palm branch.⁴⁴ The first variety has the letter M in the left field and A in the right, whereas the second variety has the inscription A above A in the right field.

Tigranes II (95 - 55 BC)

The majority of the recorded coins of the Artaxiads are those of Tigranes the Great. It is believed that most of the king’s tetradrachms were minted in Antioch.⁴⁵ However, his drachms and a large amount of the bronzes are believed to have been struck in Armenia, with mints most probably located in Artaxata and perhaps Tigranocerta.⁴⁶ The consensus is that the coins bearing the imperial title – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ – are from mints located within Armenian lands, whereas the coins with the royal title – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ – come from mints in newly acquired territories.⁴⁷

Tetradrachms

There exist several systems of classification for the tetradrachms of Tigranes II; the most widely used being that of Bedoukian’s corpus. One of the earliest attempts for the classification of the tetradrachms was MacDonald’s, who used the title on the coins as a means of cataloging them, a system which is still used by numismatists today.⁴⁸ Later, Toros used the monograms on the coins to extend the classification system, but without looking at stylistic differences in the coinage.⁴⁹ Of the more in-depth studies of the varieties of the tetradrachms of Tigranes II, the works of Foss and Nercessian have provided a more detailed and comprehensive classification.⁵⁰ Other numismatists have tried to classify the tetradrachms of Tigranes II using the monograms in correlation with the variations of the tiara

⁴¹ For the issue regarding gold coins, see Bedoukian 1964, 303-306.

⁴² For a description of the various tiara shapes and decorations used in the region, refer to Young 1964, 29-34.

⁴³ CAA, 9-11. Currently there is a debate on the attribution of these coins. For the various discussions and a re-attribution to Tigranes III, see ‘Attribution’ below.

⁴⁴ Nercessian 2000e, 6.

⁴⁵ CAA, 13-14; Nercessian 2000c, 13.

⁴⁶ Newell 1939, 98.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Bedoukian 1968a, 53-54; Nercessian 2000c, 13.

⁴⁸ MacDonald 1902, 193-201.

⁴⁹ Toros 1976.

⁵⁰ Foss 1986a, 19-66; Nercessian 2000a, 117-32.

peaks (triangular, one bead, double beads, etc.). However, this method is too complicated and inconsistent, since overlaps exist where the same monograms can be found on coins with different tiara peaks.⁵¹

In this study, the tetradrachms of Tigranes II are classified according to the legend and tiara decoration. These in turn can be further classified according to the monograms. However, as mentioned above, since the meaning of these symbols has not yet been understood (whether they represent mints, workshops, control marks, magistrates' names, etc.), they will be discussed separately under 'Monograms and Field Marks'.

1. Imperial Title

The tetradrachms with the imperial title are very rare. The obverse depicts the portrait of the king facing right and wearing the traditional Armenian tiara having long flaps covering the ears and neck. The tiara is adorned with a star⁵² flanked by two eagles standing back to back but with their heads facing one another. The reverse depicts Tyche seated right on a rock and holding a palm branch with her feet resting on a swimming torso representing the river Orontes. The entire obverse design is placed within a fillet border, whereas the reverse is placed within a wreath having a thunderbolt-like pattern on top (no. 5). It is assumed that this group is from the mint of Artaxata.⁵³ These coins have on the reverse the letters ΖΑ, ΗΑ and ΘΑ, which are most probably regnal years corresponding to the 37th, 38th and 39th year of Tigranes' rule, ie, 59/8, 58/7 and 57/6 BC.

2. Royal Title

The tetradrachms which bear the royal title can be divided into three groups according to the decoration on the tiara:

a. *Star and two eagles*

These coins are from the mint of Antioch and are the most common of Tigranes' tetradrachms. The large number of specimens thus far known and the considerable number of dies from which they have been struck indicate that they were issued in abundance. The tiara design is similar to the above coins (no. 6). It is believed that the imagery of the Tyche of Antioch is copied after Eutyichides of Sicyon's gilt bronze statue standing in the city.⁵⁴ Various monograms can be found on the tetradrachms of this group.

b. *Star and volute*

These very rare tetradrachms were minted in Damascus. The obverse tiara is adorned with a star and a volute (Σ) to its right, probably representing an eagle. The reverse has the Tyche of Damascus seated *left* with an outstretched right arm and holding a cornucopia in her left hand. Her feet are resting on the torso of a nude figure representing the river Chrysorrhoas swimming to front (no. 7).⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that these tetradrachms bear dates based on the Seleucid Era. These are represented by the letters ΑΜΣ = 72/71 BC, ΒΜΣ = 71/70 BC and ΓΜΣ = 70/69 BC, thus corresponding to the years 72 - 69 BC, when Tigranes II controlled the city.

c. *Star with comet tail*

The tiara decoration on this group of tetradrachms depicts a star with an extended comet's tail and having no eagles (no. 8). These coins are assumed to be from a mint other than Antioch or Artaxata.⁵⁶ This variety does not have the usual monograms or field letters common to the above two groups.

Drachms

The drachms of Tigranes II can be divided into two groups:

⁵¹ For example, CAA coin nos 11, 13 and 25 all have different tiara peak designs and yet have the same monogram. The case is the same for coin nos 20, 26 and 28.

⁵² The Artaxiads associated themselves with the sun god Areg-Mihr or Mithras (Lang 1980, 128). Note that the spikes of the tiara are also fashioned similar to sun rays.

⁵³ CAA, 15. Some consider that the seated figure personifies the Tyche of Artaxata and the swimming figure that of the river Araxes.

⁵⁴ Head 1887, 773.

⁵⁵ CAA, 15; Nercessian 2000g, 99-100.

⁵⁶ CAA, 14-15.

1. Imperial Title

The vast majority of the drachms of Tigranes the Great bear the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ (no. 9). The style of these coins is very similar to the tetradrachms having the same legend. In addition, the field marks on the two silver denominations are similar to one another, but different from those found on the tetradrachms issued in Antioch.⁵⁷

On the reverse of these drachms there are Greek letters representing numbers. It was MacDonald who first studied these letters, ΔΛ=34, ΕΛ=35, ζΛ=36, ΖΛ=37 and ΗΛ=38, and considered them to be a system of dating starting in 111 BC.⁵⁸ Thus, according to him, these drachms were minted between 77 and 73 BC. Mousheghian also agreed with this system of dating and extended the dates to ΘΛ=39=72 BC.⁵⁹ In his study, Mousheghian notes that a group of Greek letters, Α, Β, Γ, Δ, Ε, ζ, Ζ, Η, Θ and Ι, inscribed on the reverse below the palm branch, represent the month in which the coins were minted.⁶⁰ MacDonald was also in favor of interpreting these letters as months.⁶¹ However, as Bedoukian points out, there exist other letters such as Κ, Λ and Ο, which are too high to denote months.⁶² Nercessian agrees that the double digit numbers represent a system of dating starting in 111 BC, but considers the single digit numbers as a sequence of numbering for the coin issues.⁶³ Yet this reckoning in turn does not seem to be plausible since there are wide gaps in the sequence (for example the gaps between ΙΒ, Κ, Λ and Ο, which correspond to the numbers 12, 20, 30 and 70, respectively). Thus, for the time being, it is difficult to infer any sort of meaning for these letters or numbers.

Foss, in his more recent study of the drachms, has reached the conclusion that the lettering, “which

may be read as numbers ranging from 34 to 38,”⁶⁴ represent the regnal years of Tigranes II, thus corresponding to the years 62 - 58 BC. Bedoukian does not consider these numbers as representing regnal years on the grounds that they would only represent the last few years of the king, who ruled for a considerably long period of forty years.⁶⁵ In fact, this does seem to be logical, since during the last years of Tigranes II's rule, the king was forced to retreat from his newly acquired territories and submit to Rome's rule. Consequently, there seems to have been a period of decline in his power and wealth, as he was forced to pay a tribute of 6,000 talents to Pompey⁶⁶ and was deprived of the tribute he received from his conquered territories. Therefore, it would not be surprising to see Tigranes II issuing silver coins in smaller denominations during the end of his reign.⁶⁷ This trend in the decline of the silver coinage is even more apparent for the successors of Tigranes II. We have 3 tetradrachms and 12 drachms of his son Artavasdes II, only four drachms for Artaxias II, with a single drachm for Tigranes III and no silver coins at all for Tigranes IV, Artavasdes III and Tigranes V.

2. Royal Title

There exists a second variety of the drachms which is similar to the comet tetradrachms mentioned above, and like them is very rare (no. 10).⁶⁸ There are as yet no drachms from the Damascus mint nor any which can be attributed to the Antioch mint, i.e., tiara decoration having a star and 2 eagles.

As mentioned above, the drachms of Tigranes II with the imperial title seem to have been minted in greater quantities than the tetradrachms, as the

⁵⁷ Ibid, 16.

⁵⁸ MacDonald 1902, 197-198.

⁵⁹ Mousheghian 1978, 119. The author argues that the Armenians would have adopted this system of dating due to the conquests of Tigranes II of the Syrian and Phoenician territories, where this system was already in use. However, there is yet no epigraphic evidence proving the use of this system in Armenia.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 123-124.

⁶¹ MacDonald 1902, 197.

⁶² CAA, 17.

⁶³ Nercessian 2006, 150 (hereafter SCADA).

⁶⁴ Foss 1986a, 25.

⁶⁵ CAA, 16-17.

⁶⁶ Strabo *Geography* 11.14.10; Appian *Mithridates* 104; Plutarch *Pompey* 33.3-4.

⁶⁷ See the discussion under ‘Chronology’.

⁶⁸ Nercessian 1995, 60 (hereafter ACV).

number of known drachms is significantly more than its bigger denomination.⁶⁹ This may be an indication that the preferred silver denomination in Armenia was the drachm. The opposite preference may have held true in territories outside of Armenia, since there exists abundant tetradrachms and only a very few drachms with the royal title. Alternately, as discussed above, the scarcity of the tetradrachms with the imperial title could also be seen as an indication of the diminishing wealth of Tigranes II during the later years of this king's reign.

Fractional silver

There exist three coin types attributed to Tigranes II struck in silver, but of a smaller denomination than the drachms.⁷⁰ These coins have weights ranging between 2.1 - 3.5 gr. The weight of these coins is not significantly less than those of the drachms, which range from 3.2 to 4.6 gr. However, their size, 13-14 mm, is considerably smaller as compared to 19-21 mm for the drachms.

- **Biga:** Bedoukian lists this type as having a horse on the reverse.⁷¹ Foss, however, describes the reverse of this coin as a biga.⁷² More recently, a silver coin has emerged with a reverse clearly showing a biga driven by a figure (described as that of the king) with a weight of 2.1 gr and a diameter of 14 mm (no. 11).⁷³ The inscriptions read [ΒΑΣΙΛ]ΕΩ[Σ] [ΒΑ]ΣΙΛΕΩΝ [Τ]ΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ. Based on this new find, it has been established that the reverse type for this fractional silver coin is a biga and not a horse.

- **Elephant:** The reverse of this type depicts an elephant standing right with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ above it, and with the king's name most probably located below the elephant, but off the flan (no. 12).⁷⁴ The weight of the coin is 3.1 gr. There are some irregularities concerning this unique specimen. The portrait of the obverse is too large for the flan size, especially when

compared with the portrait size of the other two types of this denomination. Similarly, the style of the reverse is also somewhat irregular, and seems to be a tooled coin. A note should be made also concerning the inscription, where the sigma is inscribed using both the lunate and square form. Thus, this coin may be a forgery, keeping in mind that there also exist forgeries of the elephant type struck in bronze (see below).

- **Tyche:** The image of the seated Tyche on the reverse of this unique coin (no. 13), and the legend reading [ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ] ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ, is entirely in line with those of the drachms. The weight recorded for this coin is 2.95 gr. Thus, the weight of this 'fractional' silver is not drastically lower than the drachms (knowing that there exist drachms weighing as low as 3.20 gr), but the size of the coin is considerably smaller. The obverse shares a die with the above 'horse' type. Interestingly, the reverse die is not engraved in proportion to the small flan size. Therefore, this coin seems to be an anomaly created by using the obverse die of a fractional silver and the reverse die of a drachm.

Bronzes

The copper coins of Tigranes II have a variety of reverse types, but the obverse invariably depicts the king's portrait wearing the distinctive tiara. Most of the bronzes cannot be attributed to mints with absolute certainty, except for Damascus. Nonetheless, because bronze coins were mainly for local use, it is safe to assume that they were mostly issued from mints within Armenia. The bronze coinage of Tigranes II can be divided into two main categories:

1. Imperial Title

- **Seated Tyche:** These coins bear a close resemblance to the drachms and are quite common (no. 14).⁷⁵ This type has a weight-range between 3 - 11 gr. This wide range is considerable but not

⁶⁹ ACV lists 98 drachms and only 6 tetradrachms.

⁷⁰ CAA coin nos 88, 89 and 90.

⁷¹ CAA, 61.

⁷² Foss 1986a, 26.

⁷³ Nercessian 2003b, 62, plate 4, coin no. 3.

⁷⁴ CAA, 61.

⁷⁵ There exist bronzes of this type having a blundered legend, a feature which is uncommon on all other coins of Tigranes II. For details refer to CAA coin nos 96 and 97.

unusual, considering that there was often no strict control on the weight standards used for bronze coins.

- **Heracles:** This type depicts the hero standing left, with his right hand resting on a club and the left holding a folded lion skin (no. 15).⁷⁶ The weight usually ranges between 4 - 5 gr.

- **Cornucopia:** This type depicts a cornucopia and has a relatively low weight of 2 - 3 gr. The upper portion of the cornucopia curves either to the right or left (no. 16).

- **Wheat:** Among the smallest of Tigranes' coins, weighing less than 2 grams, are those that depict an ear of wheat (no. 17). It seems that some of the reverse dies of this type are apparently engraved for use on larger blanks, since the design and inscriptions are too big for the small flans used to strike these coins.

- **Quadriga:** There exist a few coins of Tigranes II depicting a quadriga to left (no. 18). Foss remarks that the portrait resembles that of the fractional silver specimens.⁷⁷ It is worth noting that the silver issues depict a biga, whereas the bronzes have a quadriga.

- **Seated Zeus (?)** left (no. 19): Bedoukian has attributed this exceedingly rare type to Tigranes IV.⁷⁸ However, recent scholarship has rightfully shown that this coin shares an obverse die with the fractional silver having a Tyche reverse (see no. 13).⁷⁹ Thus, this coin is now attributed to Tigranes II and not Tigranes IV.

2. Royal Title

a. Star and two eagles

- **Tyche of Antioch:** The Tyche of Antioch type with this inscription is very similar to the issues with the imperial title, but unlike them it is very rare (no. 20).

- **Nike:** This type depicts Nike holding a wreath and advancing left (no. 21). A second variety of this type, which is probably the product of a different mint, has a prominent letter A on

the obverse behind the king's head. Additionally, the tiara is decorated with two vertical dotted lines flanking the star instead of the usual eagles (no. 22).

- **Elephant:** This type is rare and depicts an elephant standing left or right (no. 23). However, caution is advised concerning this type, since most of the known specimens are either modern forgeries or tooled coins.

b. Star and volute

This group can be attributed to the mint of Damascus based on the tiara decoration and the reverse design. Unlike the tetradrachms, they do not have dates inscribed on them, but bear similar field marks.

- **Seated Tyche of Damascus:** These bronze coins are very similar in style and type to those of the tetradrachms of this mint. However, unlike the tetradrachms, the bronzes are more common (no. 24).

- **Standing Tyche:** This group depicts Tyche standing left, rather than seated. She is holding a cornucopia in her left hand and her right hand is resting on a tiller (no. 25).

- **Nike:** This extremely rare type issued in Damascus depicts Nike advancing left (no. 26).

c. Star with comet tail

- **Seated Tyche:** The reverse depicts the usual seated Tyche of Antioch, but the tiara decoration is of the comet-star variety (no. 27).

- **Standing Tyche:** Until now all the coins with a standing Tyche on the reverse have been attributed to the mint of Damascus, but with close inspection it can be seen that there are two distinguishable varieties. The first are those which have been correctly attributed to Damascus, based on the style of the portrait, the shape of the tiara and the volute decoration. These coins also bear field marks on the reverse which are similar to those on the tetradrachms and bronzes of this mint (see no. 25 above).⁸⁰ However, a

⁷⁶ Also referred to as Vahakn, the Armenian equivalent of the Greek hero.

⁷⁷ Foss 1986a, 39, 51.

⁷⁸ CAA, coin no. 159.

⁷⁹ Vardanyan 2004b, 78-80.

⁸⁰ For a list of the field marks on the coins of the Damascus mint, see 'Monograms and Field Marks'.

second group of coins having this same reverse type should be classified under the ‘comet-star’ category, as attested by the portrait style, tiara shape (having long flaps) and decoration (comet-star), in addition to the absence of the field marks associated with the Damascus mint (no. 28).

- **Nike:** This type is similar to the other Nike types of Tigranes II, with the exception of the tiara decoration (no. 29).

- **Palm Branch:** The reverse of these coins depicts a palm branch, either vertically upright or curving to the right or left (no. 30).

- **Tripod:** These small coins depict a tripod on the reverse and are relatively rare (no. 31).

- **Horse:** It was Foss who first published this type with a reverse depicting a horse advancing right with its head lowered.⁸¹ During the following years, more specimens of this type were published by Nercessian, confirming the attribution to Tigranes II (no. 32).⁸²

- **Tree:** Nercessian lists bronze coins of Tigranes II with a cypress tree reverse (no. 33).⁸³

- **Club:** These rare coins of Tigranes II depict a club on the reverse and are often not well preserved. Consequently, it is often difficult to differentiate between this type and that of the cypress tree (no. 34).⁸⁴

Artavasdes II (55 - 34 BC)

This king issued tetradrachms, drachms and bronzes, but the reverse types and the quantity of coins issued were significantly less than those of his father, despite the fact that he reigned for more than two decades. Artavasdes II continued to use the title ‘king of kings’ on his coins, which are classified as follows:

Tetradrachms

The tetradrachms of this king are extremely rare.⁸⁵ On the obverse the king wears the usual

five-pointed Armenian tiara adorned with a star, placed within a square, and flanked with wavy lines or crescents. The flaps covering the ears have been folded upward revealing the ear adorned with an earring. The reverse depicts a figure driving a quadriga to left (no. 35). It is uncertain if this figure represents the king or the sun god, who is often depicted driving a chariot. The inscription reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΤΑΥΑΣΔΕΩ ΘΕΙΟΥ. In the left field of the reverse there exists the letters IZ and IH inscribed above the monogram Ϝ . It is stated that these letters most probably represent regnal years corresponding to the years 17 and 18 of the king’s reign.⁸⁶ However, it is also possible that these letters signify a system of numbering.

Drachms

The drachms have very similar designs as the tetradrachms. The reverse is slightly different in that a small Nike is depicted above the reins crowning the figure. The inscriptions read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΤΑΥΑΖΔΟΥ (no. 36).⁸⁷ The letters ζ, Z and IZ can be found on the reverse of the drachms.⁸⁸ It is believed that these letters represent regnal years corresponding to the years 6, 7 and 16 of the king’s reign, but again it is difficult to confirm this. The monogram Ϝ is also found in the left field of the reverse. Mousheghian believes that this symbol represents the monogram of Artaxata,⁸⁹ but there is no historical or epigraphic evidence to prove this.

Bronzes

In his corpus, Bedoukian documents that Artavasdes II issued bronze coins with 3 known reverse types: Nike, king’s figure and an ear of wheat.⁹⁰ Nercessian documents the types: Nike, king’s figure and a cypress tree.⁹¹ However, recent

⁸¹ Foss 1986a, 41, 51.

⁸² Nercessian 1998, 28.

⁸³ ACV, 71. These coins are tentatively listed under the comet-star category, since the surviving specimens are not well preserved.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 73. These coins are also tentatively listed under the comet-star category.

⁸⁵ ACV lists only 3 known specimens.

⁸⁶ Foss 1986a, 27 (footnote no. 23).

⁸⁷ The Z is sometimes inscribed as Σ.

⁸⁸ SCADA, 109-111. The field letter IZ is found on a single fourré specimen.

⁸⁹ Mousheghian 1964, 321.

⁹⁰ CAA, 26-27.

⁹¹ ACV, 76-77.

scholarship has shown that the 'king's figure' is none other than Nike.⁹² Therefore, it can now be stated that Artavasdes II has only 3 known reverse types for bronzes, all of which bear the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΑΡΤΑΥΑΖΔΟΥ:

- **Nike:** The most common type depicts a Nike advancing left and holding an object (wreath?) in her outstretched hand (no. 37).

- **Tree:** This type depicts a cypress tree on the reverse (no. 38).

- **Wheat:** It was Bedoukian who first documented this reverse type in his corpus (no. 39). However, as the bronze coins are mostly in poor condition, it is difficult to distinguish between an ear of wheat and a cypress tree. Thus, the very existence of this type is questionable.⁹³

On the obverse of some of these coins, there exists a letter **A** behind the king's head, the significance of which is unknown. It should also be noted that some coins have a concave reverse, a feature which is uncommon on all other Artaxiad coins. It remains curious as to why only three (possibly two) bronze types are known for this king who ruled for more than 20 years, especially when compared to the numerous bronze types of his predecessor and successor. Perhaps an explanation can be found in the fact that because Tigranes II issued vast amounts of coins, they remained in circulation for a long time after his death, and therefore there was no need to supply the market with many coins.

Alexander (34 - 30 BC)

There are no coins attributed to the son of Cleopatra and Antony, and in most probability no coins were issued in his name as king of Armenia.

Artaxias II (30 - 20 BC)

At the time of the publication of CAA in 1978, there were no coins that could be attributed to this king with absolute certainty. Since then, a variety

of silver and bronze types have emerged for this king.

Drachms

There exist two types in silver attributed to this king, which have been separately discussed and published.⁹⁴ The obverse depicts the bust of the king wearing an Armenian tiara decorated with a star placed within a beaded square. The ear flap is folded upward similar to Artavasdes II. The reverse types are:

- **Athena** standing left, holding a spear and shield (no. 40).

- **Nike** advancing right, holding a wreath and a palm branch over her shoulder (no. 41).

The legend on both types is circular and reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΤΑΞΕΡΞΕΩ ΘΕΙΟΥ. The obverse is enclosed in a laurel wreath, whereas the reverse is enclosed in a solid circle. The weights of the 4 coins range from 2.6 to 4.0 gr, with a diameter of 21-24 mm. On the reverse of both specimens there are the letters ΙΔ in the right field and the monogram  in the exergue. If the field letters on the reverse are to signify regnal years, then these would indicate year 14 of the king's rule. Although it is known that Artaxias II ruled for 10 years, from 30-20 BC, it is believed by some numismatists that Artaxias considered himself the rightful heir to the throne starting from his father's death in 34 BC.⁹⁵ However, it is curious as to why the surviving silver coins of this king are all dated to his last year in power. Alternately, the probability that these field marks may represent a system of dating or a sequence of numbering should not be ruled out.

Bronzes

In Bedoukian's corpus there was only one bronze type with a Nike reverse tentatively attributed to Artaxias II, since the king's name was not legible on the coin.⁹⁶ Yet by the time Nercessian published ACV in 1995, although 18 coins of the above type

⁹² Mousheghian and Depeyrot 1999, 167 (hereafter HRAC).

⁹³ For further details see Vardanyan 2004b, 30-33.

⁹⁴ Ronde and Torossian 1997, 25-26; HRAC, 170; Saryan 1997, 7-16; Nercessian 2003a, 346-372.

⁹⁵ SCADA, 161.

⁹⁶ CAA coin no. 136.

had been discovered, none bore the complete legend.⁹⁷ Recently, a well preserved specimen of this type has been published with inscriptions clearly reading ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛ[ΟΥ] ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ[Υ] (see no. 58).⁹⁸ Consequently, this type has now been omitted from Artaxias II's issues.

It was only with the recent discoveries from the excavations of Artaxata, and coins being circulated in the market, that new bronze types have been attributed to Artaxias II.⁹⁹

• **Cornucopia:** The obverse of this type depicts the head of the king facing right and wearing a tiara decorated with an eight-pointed star (no. 42). The reverse depicts a cornucopia tied with a ribbon. The inscription on the reverse reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΡΤΑΞΕΡΞ[...]. In the outer right field there exists the letters CA and in the outer left field the letters XP. Vardanyan considers that the letters in the right field represent the number 36 (reading it as ζΛ), thus corresponding to the year 31/30 BC according to a Pompeian Era (66 BC - 36 = 30 BC).¹⁰⁰ With regards to the letters in the left field, he considers them to be a mark of value for the coin by interpreting the XP as XB, which according to him signifies 2 chalci.¹⁰¹ However, both hypotheses are not convincing, since they are based on an alteration of the reading of the inscriptions. Further specimens are required to understand a meaning for these field marks.

• **Bunch of grapes:** The obverse of this type is similar to the above and the reverse depicts a bunch of grapes (no. 43).

• **Dog:** The weight of these coins are approximately 1.0 - 1.6 gr and their sizes 11 - 12 mm. On the reverse there are Aramaic inscriptions reading MLK', meaning king (no. 44). Unfortunately the Aramaic inscriptions below the dog cannot be deciphered due to the bad

condition of all the known coins of this type (see below for the interpretation of the full reading of these Aramaic inscriptions).

• **Eagle:** On the coins of this type the inscriptions are found on the obverse. Unfortunately, none of the inscriptions can be read due to the bad condition of the specimens. The reverse depicts a bird, most likely an eagle, standing left (no. 45). The average weight of these coins is around 0.8 - 1.1 gr and the sizes 11 - 12 mm.

• **Head:** The obverse of this type is different in that the portrait of the king is depicted facing *left*. The reverse depicts a head facing right which is, at times, bearded (no. 46).¹⁰² The inscriptions on this type are found on the obverse where MLK', in Aramaic, can be read behind the king's head. This type is heavier than the above types, with weights mostly between 2.5 - 3.5 gr and sizes 15 - 17 mm.

• **Bee:** This type depicts the portrait of the king facing right or left (no. 47). The inscriptions are inscribed on the obverse, but unfortunately they cannot be read. Most of these coins have weights between 1.2 - 1.7 gr and sizes from 12 - 14 mm.

It is interesting to note that the silver coins and some of the bronzes of this king have circular inscriptions unlike those of his predecessors or immediate successors. The most interesting aspect is the fact that some of them have inscriptions written in Aramaic. Unfortunately, of all the coins known to date none bear the full legend. However, after analyzing these inscriptions, Vardanyan concludes that the full legend should read: 'king Artashes' (keeping in mind that Artaxias is the Greek form of the Armenian name Artashes).¹⁰³ Aramaic inscriptions are not unusual for the Artaxiad period in Armenia. There exist several border stones inscribed in Aramaic.¹⁰⁴ Was the use

⁹⁷ ACV, 77.

⁹⁸ Kovacs 2004, 83-86, coin no. 3.

⁹⁹ Unless otherwise stated, the information in the following section is from Vardanyan and Vardanyan 2005, 75-120.

¹⁰⁰ The autumn of 66 BC is generally considered as the initiation date of a Pompeian Era in certain regions, most notably Antioch (Seyrig 1950, 11).

¹⁰¹ Vardanyan 2001, 89-94.

¹⁰² On some issues a diadem seems to be worn by the figure.

¹⁰³ Vardanyan and Vardanyan 2005, 96-98.

¹⁰⁴ These border stones are attributed to the reign of Artaxias I, founder of the Artaxiad Dynasty. For a detailed study of these inscriptions refer to Perikhanian 1971, 169-174.

of Aramaic on the coins of Artaxias II a deliberate act of rejection of the Greek system? Did it have any political, anti-Roman, implications? It is also interesting that this monarch was depicted both with a left and right facing portrait on his coins, an aspect which was hitherto unique to the coins attributed to Tigranes I. Was this aspect also a means of emulating the Parthian way of depicting their monarchs on coins in general? Further coin finds and historical evidence is required to answer these questions.

Tigranes III (20 - 8 BC)

Tigranes III is sometimes portrayed on his coins clean shaven and at times lightly bearded. Some numismatists interpret the beard as an indication that the king became pro-Parthian during the end of his rule and decided to portray himself in a manner similar to the Parthians.¹⁰⁵

Drachms

There exists only a single specimen of this denomination, the obverse of which has the king lightly bearded and wearing a long pointed tiara decorated with a star (no. 48). The reverse depicts a figure with a tiara wearing a long tunic and holding a spear in the left hand and an uncertain object in the right. The legend reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ.¹⁰⁶

Hemidrachms

This unique hemidrachm has a diameter of 13 mm and weighs 0.93 gr (no. 49).¹⁰⁷ The obverse is similar to the drachm, but the reverse depicts Nike advancing left. The legend is incomplete with only the king's name [T]ΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ partially legible.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ CAA, 31. Although the growing of a beard is seen as an indication of a pro-Parthian political inclination, this may not necessarily be the case. The pro-Roman king Artavasdes III is also depicted bearded (see below), yet there is no evidence pointing to his Parthian inclination.

¹⁰⁶ Newell 1926, 13-15.

¹⁰⁷ The low weight is due to the coin being only partially preserved.

Bronzes

Some of the bronze coins of this king have legends which are inscribed either vertically or horizontally and read ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ.¹⁰⁹ Another variety has a Parthian style square legend reading ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ. This is seen by some numismatists as yet another indication that the king became pro-Parthian.¹¹⁰ The bronze coins can be divided into three groups based on the orientation of the inscriptions:

1. Horizontal legend

- King driving a **biga** and holding the reins with his left hand and an object (palm or eagle) with his right (no. 50).
- **Thunderbolt** (no. 51).
- **Horseman** (king?) riding left and brandishing a spear (no. 52).

2. Vertical legend

- **Eagle** standing left (no. 53).
- **Warrior** (Athena?) holding a spear and shield (no. 54).¹¹¹
- **Horse protome** left (no. 55).

3. Square legend

- **Horse** standing left with raised foreleg (no. 56).
- **Elephant** standing left (no. 57).
- **Nike** advancing right holding a wreath (no. 58).
- **Lion's head** right (no. 59).¹¹²

Tigranes IV, 1st reign (8 - 5 BC)

There are no silver coins attributed to this king. The portrait is distinct among the Artaxiads in that the king is portrayed heavily bearded. The

¹⁰⁸ Donabedian 1979, 137. Attribution of this coin to Tigranes III, and not Tigranes II, is based on the portrait being bearded.

¹⁰⁹ The Σ is sometimes inscribed as a C.

¹¹⁰ CAA, 31.

¹¹¹ Attribution of this type to Tigranes III is tentative, since only a very few badly worn specimens exist.

¹¹² This type is exceedingly rare, and therefore attribution to this king is tentative.

tiara design is similar to his predecessor and the legend invariably reads: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ, where the ‘Σ’ is sometimes inscribed as ‘C’. The reverse types of this king are:

- **Nike** advancing right with upraised hands (no. 60).
- **Figure** (priest?) wearing a conical hat and standing right with upraised hand. The figure is depicted with an object on his back, possibly a cornucopia (no. 61).
- **Elephant** with raised trunk standing left or right (no. 62).
- **Elephant’s head** left with raised trunk (no. 63).
- **Eagle** standing right or left (no. 64).
- **Heracles** bearded and nude standing left and holding a lion’s skin and club (no. 65).
- **Palm branch** (no. 66).
- **Double-headed ax and club** (no. 67).

Artavasdes III (5 - 2 BC)

A small group of coins with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΤΑΥΑΖΔΟΥ are attributed to Artavasdes III. These coins depict the bearded portrait of the king facing right and wearing an Armenian tiara decorated with a star. No silver coins are attested to this king and his bronzes come in only two types:

- **Athena** holding a spear with her right hand and her left hand resting on a shield (no. 68).
- **Eagle perched** left atop pyre (no. 69).¹¹³

Tigranes IV, 2nd reign (2 BC - AD 1)

Scholars believe that Tigranes IV had a second reign with Erato after Artavasdes III’s death, although he may never have been formally

recognized by Rome as king of Armenia. There are two bronze types attributed to the second reign which bear the same legend as the coins from his first reign:¹¹⁴

- The first type depicts on the obverse a jugate head of the bearded king and Erato. The reverse shows **Tyche seated left** on a prow of a ship and holding a cornucopia in her left hand and a tiller in her right (it is often stated that she holds an ankh). In the exergue the letters TEK can be found (no. 70).¹¹⁵
- The second type has a similar obverse, but the reverse depicts the **forepart of a horse** prancing right. The exergue has the letters TCY (or TCY) (no. 71).

Ariobarzanes (AD 2 - 4)

There are no known coins of this king as ruler of Armenia.

Artavasdes IV (AD 4 - 6)

Silver drachms are attributed to this king having on one side the bust of Artavasdes facing right, with inscriptions ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΑΡΤΑΥΑΖΔΟΥ, and on the other the bust of Augustus, also facing right, with inscriptions ΘΕΟΥ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ (no. 72).¹¹⁶ It is probable that these coins were issued by the Roman emperor to commemorate the crowning of the Median king on the Armenian throne. Unfortunately, the provenance of the surviving coins is not known, as a consequence of which it is unclear if these drachms were issued in Armenia or elsewhere in Asia Minor. It should be noted that the style of these coins has a ‘Romanized’ appearance. The weight of the few

¹¹³ This type was previously attributed to Artaxias I (Donabedian 1971, 135-43).

¹¹⁴ Bedoukian states that there is historical evidence that Tigranes IV ruled jointly with Erato during his *second* reign, but unfortunately he does not provide any sources (CAA, 36-37). Although there is historical evidence for a joint rule of Tigranes IV and Erato (Tacitus *Annales* 2.3), there is no concrete evidence showing that this joint rule took place only during the king’s second reign. Thus, the jugate coins

could have been issued during his first and/or second reign.

¹¹⁵ For a questionable attribution by Kovacs of this type to Aradus, refer to the discussion in Burnett, Amandry, and Ripollès 2006, 57-58 (Supplement 2).

¹¹⁶ Although some numismatists state that the side depicting Artavasdes is the obverse, this may not necessarily be the case. It is only after a good number of specimens are found and a thorough die-study is conducted that this question can be answered.

known specimens range between 3.5 - 3.7 gr and the size is 20 mm. There exists the field mark Γ in front of Artavasdes' head.

A unique but badly preserved bronze coin weighing 6.65 gr, having similar types as the above coins but with an incomplete legend reading [...]OY ARTA[...]OY, is also attributed to Artavasdes IV (no. 73).¹¹⁷ However, unlike the silver specimens, the bust of Augustus faces left. The authors of RPC consider that this specimen may be the copper core of a plated forgery of the above silver issues.¹¹⁸ If indeed the bronze coin is a forgery, it is most likely a contemporary one, since it was found in the vicinity of Artaxata by workmen.

Tigranes V (AD 6)

There are two bronze types for this king:

- Tigranes V and Erato: The obverse of this type has the bust of the king facing right and wearing a tiara. The legend is circular and reads BACIAEYC MEΓAC NEOC TIGPANHC. The reverse depicts the bust of Erato to left with the inscriptions EPATW BACIAEWC TIGPANOY AΔEΛΦH (no. 74). The term 'new Tigranes' is interesting; perhaps it refers to the fact that this king was a distant relative of the Artaxiads, or to the fact that this was a new Tigranes ruling with queen Erato (sister of Tigranes IV) as the term AΔEΛΦH may indicate.¹¹⁹

- Tigranes V and Augustus: This type has a similar obverse as the above, but the reverse has the bust of Augustus facing left and the legend KAICAP ΘEOC ΘEOY YIOC CEBACTOC (no. 75).

Bedoukian lists a third type (CAA coin no. 165), represented by a unique coin having a similar obverse and reverse as the first type, but with a different obverse legend reading: BACIAEYC BACIAEON TIGPANHC. The title 'King of Kings' on the coin is rather intriguing as this title had not been in use by the Artaxiads since Artavasdes II. In this respect, RPC remarks that "the legend does not really look authentic. It seems that it may have been altered from the normal reading."¹²⁰ Foss is similarly skeptical of this coin and after a close inspection of the specimen (housed in the Cabinet de Médailles, Paris), he concludes that it is a retooled coin belonging to the first group.¹²¹

Uncertain

A few bronze coins having on the obverse jugate busts (with the one in front wearing an Armenian tiara) and a reverse depicting a twin peaked mountain is considered to be an issue of the Artaxiad Dynasty (no. 76).¹²² Most of these coins average 4 gr in weight and measure approximately 20 mm in diameter.

¹¹⁷ Sarkissian 1975, 186; CAA, 76.

¹¹⁸ Burnett, Amandry, and Ripollès 1992, 571, coin no. 3843 (hereafter RPC).

¹¹⁹ CAA, 39. For a discussion on the relation of Erato with Tigranes IV and Tigranes V, see 'Attribution'.

¹²⁰ RPC, 571.

¹²¹ Foss 1986a, 36 n. 55.

¹²² For the various attributions of this type, see discussion under 'Attribution'.

ATTRIBUTION

The main predicament concerning attribution arises from the fact that the Artaxiad dynasty had ten Armenian kings using just three different names. This creates a difficulty in assigning coins to their proper kings. This is especially true for bronze coins due to their poor condition, which makes the understanding of their legends, monograms, lettering/dates, tiara designs and decorations complicated for the numismatist.

Tigranes I

One of the main issues which remains under intense discussion is the attribution of the coins of Tigranes I.¹²³ This study proposes a reattribution of these coins to Tigranes III. But first, a survey will be provided for the evidence (or the lack of it) for the reign of this king, followed by a survey of the published material on this matter.

Evidence of the reign

Some scholars consider Tigranes the Great as the first king with that name to have ruled in Armenia. This is mostly due to the fact that ancient and modern historians provide conflicting information on the reign of a Tigranes who preceded Tigranes the Great. Appian refers to Tigranes the Great as the son of a Tigranes, but without mentioning if the elder Tigranes was a king.¹²⁴ Strabo states that Artavasdes (I) was succeeded by his *brother* Tigranes (I).¹²⁵ Justin states that an Artavasdes was the king of Armenia before Tigranes the Great.¹²⁶ He also states that “Tigranes, who had long before been committed as a hostage to the Parthians, had subsequently been sent back to take possession of his father’s throne.”¹²⁷

Of the modern scholars, Foss regards Tigranes the Great as the first king with that name on

the Armenian throne. He states that “there is no evidence that ‘Tigranes I’ was ever king of Armenia or that he was predecessor of Tigranes the Great.”¹²⁸ Similarly, Sullivan does not believe that Tigranes I was the predecessor of Tigranes the Great as he also finds “no firm evidence that he [Tigranes I] reigned at all.”¹²⁹ On the other hand, Lang and de Morgan agree to the rule of a Tigranes I; however they remain uncertain if this elder Tigranes was the father or grandfather of Tigranes II.¹³⁰ Similarly, numismatists specializing in Armenian coins, such as Bedoukian and Nercessian, agree with the existence of Tigranes I as king.¹³¹

As can be deduced from the above argument, the reign of Tigranes I is disputed, as is the very existence of this individual in history. In any case, if we are to consider that Tigranes I did reign from 123-96 BC, it is unusual for a king who ruled for such a long time to have issued a relatively small quantity of coinage.¹³²

Survey of attributions

It is interesting how Babelon attributed the coins with a left facing portrait and the coins of Tigranes III (his IV) with a horse reverse as issues of the same king.¹³³ He places the coins with a left facing portrait in a later period of Artaxiad rule and does not see them as issues of an early period. Victor Langlois also attributes the coins with a left facing portrait to Tigranes III.¹³⁴ Basmadjian, one of the pioneers in the research of Armenian coins, attributes the left facing issues and those of Tigranes III (his IV) to the same king and places them to a later period of the Artaxiad Dynasty.¹³⁵ Newell believes that the coins of Tigranes I should be attributed to Tigranes III (his II) on grounds of the similarities of the two issues and the use of the inscription ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟC.¹³⁶

¹²³ Hereafter referred to as ‘left facing Tigranes’ to avoid confusion.

¹²⁴ Appian *Syrian wars* 48.

¹²⁵ Strabo *Geography* 16.1.19.

¹²⁶ Justin *Epitome* 42.2.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.3.

¹²⁸ Foss 1986a, 48.

¹²⁹ Sullivan 1973, 25.

¹³⁰ Lang 1980, 125; de Morgan 1965, 402.

¹³¹ CAA, 9; ACV, 55.

¹³² Bedoukian lists only 21 coins in his corpus and to date only a small number of specimens have been added.

¹³³ Babelon 1890, 216.

¹³⁴ Langlois 1859, 36-38.

¹³⁵ Basmadjian 1936, 38-39.

¹³⁶ Newell 1926, 13-15.

Bedoukian and Nercessian, as discussed above, attribute the coins with a left facing portrait to Tigranes I.¹³⁷ Seyrig attributes the eleven coins with a left facing Tigranes from the Nisibis hoard (for details see ‘Hoards’ below) to a Mesopotamian mint working under Tigranes II. Seyrig’s attribution is based on his interpretation of the field marks as representing regnal years 16, 30 and 41, knowing that it was only Tigranes II who reigned that long.¹³⁸ However, these coins are stylistically different from the other coins of Tigranes II and bear a different title.

On the other hand, Foss disagrees with all the above view points.¹³⁹ He does not believe that these are the coins of Tigranes I nor Tigranes II. He emphasizes this point by stating that the style of the coins is inappropriate to the 2nd century BC, but rather fits with the portraiture style of 1st century AD Parthian coins. Thus, Foss concludes that “assignment to a period before Tigranes [II] seems excluded.”¹⁴⁰ The author also excludes the possibility of attribution to Tigranes II on the grounds that the coins in question are radically different from the ‘standard’ issues of the king. As a result, Foss attributes these coins, with reservation, to Tigranes the Younger. According to Foss’ argument, this young Tigranes had royal power on two occasions. The first was sometime before 66 BC, when he was appointed as a joint or subordinate ruler by his father.¹⁴¹ Subsequently, he revolted against his father and being defeated, fled to his father-in-law Phraates III of Parthia

(70 - 57 BC), who aided him in his attempt to regain power.¹⁴² With the coming of Pompey, he sided with the Roman general and was appointed the ruler of Sophene under Pompey’s directive.¹⁴³ Foss suggests that Tigranes the Younger “might have struck coins on any of these occasions”¹⁴⁴ and links the ‘Parthian’ characteristics of the coin (head facing left, flat portrait and the imagery on the reverse) to the period when the prince was under Parthian protection. The provenance of the Nisibis hoard containing 11 of these coins is also seen by him as an indication that they could have been issued by the young Tigranes during his preparations to regain power from his father with the assistance of Phraates III.¹⁴⁵ But it seems that Foss himself is not very convinced of his attribution of these coins to Tigranes the Younger. In another publication dealing with these left facing Tigranes coins, he states that “the series presents problems, however, and the possibility of attribution to an otherwise unknown Tigranes [apart from Tigranes the Younger] in the late first century BC cannot be excluded.”¹⁴⁶

Of the recent numismatists, Vardanyan states that the left facing issues are minted during the last decades of the first century BC. However, he does not offer any suggestions about the identity of this Tigranes.¹⁴⁷

As can be seen from the list above, the confusion remains as to whom these coins should be attributed, as candidates vary from Tigranes I, II, III, IV and Tigranes the Younger. In any case, it

¹³⁷ CAA, 9-12; Nercessian 2000d, 25-30.

¹³⁸ Seyrig 1955, 113. See discussion below for the improbability of these field marks representing regnal years.

¹³⁹ Foss 1986a, 48-50.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Appian *Mithridatic war* 104. It should be noted that Appian merely states that Tigranes the Younger was given a crown by his father and does not state that the young Tigranes was made ruler of Sophene (or any other region for that matter) as is the common misconception of some scholars.

¹⁴² Ibid; Dio Cassius *Roman history* 36.51.

¹⁴³ Foss 1986a, 49-51. Although Pompey did give Sophene to Tigranes the Younger, he never ruled over his new domain. When Pompey asked the prince to hand over the treasures

of Sophene immediately after the agreement was made, the young prince was discontent with this arrangement and fell foul with the Roman general, as a consequence of which he was chained and taken to Rome. Thus, Tigranes the Younger never actually managed to rule over Sophene under the Romans (for details, see Plutarch *Pompey* 33.5-6 and Dio Cassius *Roman history* 36.52-53).

¹⁴⁴ Foss 1986a, 50.

¹⁴⁵ Foss (1986a, 51-52) also attributes some regular issues of Tigranes II, having a ‘young looking’ portrait, to Tigranes the Younger. Apparently, he considers that this young prince issued coins with two different titles: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ.

¹⁴⁶ Foss 1986b, 66.

¹⁴⁷ Vardanyan and Vardanyan 2005, 85.

is clear that most numismatists disagree with the attribution of these coins to an early period and thus to Tigranes I.

Re-attribution to Tigranes III

It is hereby that the coins attributed to Tigranes I should be reattributed to Tigranes III, for the following reasons:

1. Left facing portrait

Until recently, the coins with a left facing portrait were unique to the Artaxiad coinage. For this reason, modern numismatists such as Bedoukian, Foss and Nercessian, felt the need to consider the series as a separate entity. Left facing portraits are no longer exclusive in the Artaxiad series. As we have seen, Artaxias II has coins with right and left facing portraits. Similarly, Tigranes III, who was the successor of Artaxias II, could have issued coins with portraits facing either side. The direction in which a king is facing on his coins may have political implications, but not necessarily so. It could just simply be an aesthetic feature and nothing more.

2. Inscriptions and field marks

The title used on both issues under discussion is very similar. The legends on the left facing coins read:

- ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ
- ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ
ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ

and those of Tigranes III read:

- ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ
- ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ
ΘΕΟΥ
- ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ
ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ

As can be seen from the list above, the title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ is used on both issues.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, the term ‘Philhellene’

¹⁴⁸ Tigranes IV uses the form ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ.

can be found *only* on the two issues and on no other Artaxiad coin. The use of a square legend is also attested on both issues and no other Artaxiad coin. Concerning the letters, it should be noted that the lunate form of the sigma is more common to the second half of the 1st cent. BC.

Regarding the attribution of these coins to Tigranes II, the field marks IS, Λ and MA were interpreted as dates corresponding to regnal years 16, 30 and 41 by Seyrig. Since it is known that only Tigranes II reigned for so many years, the attribution was considered to be ‘sound’. However, two-digit regnal years are often inscribed together and not separately. In the case of the above letters, the first digit is found in the left field, whereas the second is in the right field. This method of inscribing regnal years is not common and certainly not consistent with all the other known silver coins of Tigranes II. In fact, on some issues of the left facing Tigranes coins of the Nike type, there are field marks having an A above A, knowing that ‘AA’ is an incoherent date. For these reasons, the field letters on the coins of the left facing Tigranes should not be interpreted as regnal years and hence, attribution to Tigranes II is not relevant.

3. Tiara style

There are some similarities of the tiaras depicted on the two issues. The flaps on the tiara of the left facing Tigranes are short, which is also the case on some coins of Tigranes III. Similarly, on some coins of the two issues the ear flap is not present (see coins A and B). Additionally, it is noted that the tiara peaks on the coins of Tigranes III are usually long.¹⁴⁹ This feature can also be seen on some coins of the left facing issues (A and C). In fact, coins B and C are both issues of Tigranes III with a horse reverse, and yet the tiara style is significantly different, even though they are of the same king.

4. Chronology

The Nisibis hoard contains a large number of coins from Antioch-on-the-Orontes (214) and

¹⁴⁹ Bedoukian 1968a, 56.

Seleucia-on-the-Tigris (72).¹⁵⁰ According to Seyrig these coins did not circulate in Nisibis, but were brought there possibly by a merchant. This factor indicates that the hoard was an accumulation of far away and nearby cities and was buried in Nisibis sometime after the date of the latest issue in the hoard, ie, 31 BC (as attested by a coin of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris). Nevertheless, as Seyrig himself explains: “si les monnaies de Séleucie du Tigre avaient constitué la monnaie courante à Nisibe, elles donneraient la date de l’enfouissement du trésor. Mais il parait difficile de le croire.” Thus, he concludes by saying “ces pièces forment donc probablement, dans le trésor de Nisibe, un lot étranger, dont la date n’est pas décisive à priori.”¹⁵¹

As we can see from the statement above, the hoard was buried after 31 BC. We also know that Tigranes III’s reign started shortly after in 20 BC. In historical terms, a span of 10 years is not a long time. Thus, it is not impossible to perceive that these left facing coins could have been issued by Tigranes III.¹⁵²

5. Provenance

Apart from the Nisibis hoard, the only other left facing Tigranes coins with documented find spots were from the excavations at Üçtepe, 50 km southeast of Diyarbakir.¹⁵³ Between the years 1988-1991, five specimens of the tree type with field letters I and ζ were excavated. All the coins had on the obverse the countermark APK. It was noted that the coins were struck from different obverse and reverse dies, thus implying that these coins were probably minted in relative abundance. These finds and those from Nisibis, located some 100 km from Üçtepe, indicate that these coins seem to be concentrated in the vicinity of Nisibis, a good indication that they were minted

and circulated somewhere in that region. If these coins were indeed minted in Nisibis, it could rule out the attribution of these coins to Tigranes I, as it is nowhere mentioned in ancient sources that this king ruled as far south as Nisibis. However, Justin states that a Tigranes with the title ΘΕΟΥ conquered Media and Mesopotamia.¹⁵⁴ Knowing that Tigranes III used this title on his coins (in fact he is the only Tigranes who does so) it would not be illogical to find his coins in Nisibis.

As discussed above, early numismatists have attributed the left facing Tigranes coins to Tigranes III based on the similarities. But with the passing of time, scholars have considered these issues to be of a separate king and therefore attributed them to Tigranes I. Most recently this ascription has been contested and attribution has been sought elsewhere, perhaps to the son of Tigranes II or a yet unknown Tigranes. Nonetheless, the similarities of the issues of Tigranes III and the left facing issues are not to be neglected. With the above discussions relating to the style, inscriptions, chronology and provenance of the coins in mind, it is believed that the issues attributed to Tigranes I should be reattributed to Tigranes III.

Tigranes IV and Tigranes V

Another problem of attribution involves the succession of the last two kings bearing the name Tigranes. Some consider that Tigranes V is none other than Tigranes IV, by basing their argument on the coins issued together with Erato. For example, the authors of RPC consider the two kings as just one Tigranes by referring to the term *neos* as relating to Tigranes IV (and not V) to differentiate this Tigranes from his father Tigranes III.¹⁵⁵ Sullivan considers that the word

¹⁵⁰ Seyrig 1955, 85-128.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 100.

¹⁵² Although it is true that the tree type included in the hoard is countermarked, there is no need to assume that the countermark was applied a long time after the coin was issued. Countermarks were at times applied soon after a coin was issued, or even *before* it was put into circulation (Howgego 2005, 8). Thus, the presence of the countermarked tree type

in the Nisibis hoard does not necessarily imply that the coin had circulated for a long time before being hoarded.

¹⁵³ Tekin 1992, 43-48.

¹⁵⁴ Justin *Epitome* 41 (prologue).

¹⁵⁵ RPC, 571. Note that there are some technical errors in RPC with regards to the succession numbers of the kings with the name Tigranes. For example, Tigranes II should read Tigranes III and Tigranes III should be Tigranes IV.

neos relates to the second reign of Tigranes IV.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, Bedoukian and other scholars believe that the two kings are different from one another. They consider that the term *neos* is related to the fact that Augustus was forced to appoint a distant relative of the Artaxiads on the throne, and thus the term *neos* was used to distinguish the king from the earlier Tigranes IV. Similarly, it is considered that Erato was associated with the ‘new Tigranes’ to legitimize the rule of the *new* king.¹⁵⁷

In this study an alternate interpretation for the term *neos* is proposed. Although it is true that *neos* can mean ‘new’, it can also mean ‘young’ or ‘youthful’. Thus, the legend on the coins of Tigranes V can also be read as ‘the young Tigranes’. Indeed the portrait of Tigranes V does look young, especially when compared to Tigranes IV. There is a significant difference in the portraits of these two kings. Whereas Tigranes IV is portrayed with a heavy beard, Tigranes V is not. Similarly, there is a difference in the depiction of the coins which include the portrait of Erato. She is represented side by side (jugate) with the king on the obverse of the coins attributed to Tigranes IV, whereas on the coins attributed to Tigranes V, her bust is placed on the reverse. Why was she not depicted together with the ‘new’ or ‘young’ Tigranes on the obverse? Could this separate depiction imply a purely political relationship and not a conjugal one? If Tigranes V was a distant relative of the Artaxiads, what was his relation with Erato? Was Erato used to legitimize the rule of Tigranes V? Keeping in mind that the legend on the coins of Tigranes V with Erato read EPATW BACIAEWC TITPANOY AΔEΛΦH, could this be a reference to Tigranes V being the young brother of Erato? Could it be that the Erato on the coins of Tigranes V is different than the one on those of Tigranes IV? Unfortunately, all these questions remain unanswered due to the paucity of both historical and numismatic information which has come down to us.

¹⁵⁶ Sullivan 1973, 25 n. 21.

¹⁵⁷ Bedoukian 1971, 139.

¹⁵⁸ RPC, 571.

Artavasdes III and Artavasdes IV

The authors of RPC consider attributing the drachms of Artavasdes IV to Artavasdes III, on the grounds that the term EYEPΓETOY (benefactor) in the legend may refer to the fact that Artavasdes III “was appointed king ‘iussu Augusti’ (Tacitus, *Ann.* II.4).”¹⁵⁸ In any event, the most striking aspect of these coins is the absence of the tiara on the head of the king, making it improbable as an issue of Artavasdes III. Attribution to Artavasdes IV is more likely, since the king was not of Artaxiad descent, which might explain the absence of the tiara.

Jugate coins

Bedoukian considers the mountain on the reverse of these coins to be reminiscent of Mount Argaeus of Cappadocia, and therefore suggests that they may be coins of Tigranes II struck in Cappadocia during his early conquests of territories in that region. The author also refers to a partially legible circular inscription on the reverse reading ...ICAP and a letter A in the exergue.¹⁵⁹ Gökyıldırım, following Bedoukian, attributes these coins to Tigranes II.¹⁶⁰ The author gives possible interpretations of the partial legend ICAP, but they are mere assumptions since a full legend does not yet exist. As for the second portrait, it is considered to be that of Tigranes the Younger.

Vardanyan, in his study of a coin of this type found in ancient Artaxata, reads the legend ΛAOKAICAP on the reverse and interprets it as being ΛAOKAICAP (Λ[υκιος] A[υρηλιος] O[υηρος] KAICAP).¹⁶¹ Thus, the author attributes these coins to the period of Lucius Verus and the obverse portrait as that of the Armenian king Sohaemos, who was appointed on the Armenian throne in the early 160s AD by that emperor. This attribution seems unlikely when considering that the portrait of Lucius Verus is not depicted on the coin and that the emperor’s name would not be abbreviated by the initials ΛAO.

¹⁵⁹ CAA, 24.

¹⁶⁰ Gökyıldırım 2005, 22-23.

¹⁶¹ Vardanyan 2004a, 234-253.

According to Etterich, the inscriptions read ΤΙΓΡΑΝΗC on the obverse and ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙCΑΡ on the reverse, with the A in the exergue representing regnal year 1.¹⁶² The author remarks that there were two kings with the name Tigranes who had issued jugate coins: Tigranes IV and V. But since Tigranes IV was the enemy of Rome, he attributes these coins to Tigranes V, who was appointed by Augustus, hence explaining the inscription ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙCΑΡ. As for the reverse image, he considers the mountain with its twin peaks as representing Mount Ararat. Kovacs refers to a specimen of this type with inscriptions on the obverse reading ... ΜΕΓΑC and on the reverse ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙCΑ[P].¹⁶³ If Kovacs' and Etterich's readings are correct, and keeping in mind that the title ΜΕΓΑC and the spelling ΤΙΓΡΑΝΗC were used on the coins of Tigranes V, it is likely that these coins are those of Tigranes V. Additionally, there is no ear flap on the tiara depicted on these

coins, a characteristic which is typical on the coins of Tigranes V.

On the other hand, the possibility that this type may be an issue of Tigranes IV and Erato should also be considered. It is stated that after the death of Artavasdes III, Tigranes IV sent Augustus gifts and petitioned for recognition of a second reign. Augustus agreed and arrangements were made for Tigranes to receive his crown. These coins with the legend ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙCΑΡ could have been issued for this purpose. It should be noted that on the known coins of Tigranes V the king is depicted as being young, whereas on these coins the portrait seems to be that of an older person. Of all the thus far known coins of the Artaxiads, it is only those of Tigranes IV which have a jugate obverse. It is true that Tigranes IV is depicted with a heavy beard, but the absence of the beard on these coins could be interpreted as a sign of the king's allegiance to Rome.

¹⁶² Etterich 2005, 73.

¹⁶³ Kovacs 2004, 84.

HOARDS AND MONETARY CIRCULATION

A general problem faced by researchers studying ancient Armenian coins is the lack of recorded hoards. As hoards are often dispersed and sold in markets, needless to say without documentation, important information is lost. Additionally, hoards are often adulterated with the removal of attractive pieces and the addition of undesirable coins. Yet another problem is the absence of documented site finds from various regions of historical Armenian lands. This creates the obvious problem of having a few samples to work with for attribution, dating and provenance. Potentially, excavations in these areas can produce a wealth of information, which could fill the void in the research of Artaxiad coins. It would be pointless to include in this study the details of all the coins thus far found in Armenia.¹⁶⁴ Accordingly, it will suffice here to take account of only true hoards containing Artaxiad coins.

Sarnakounk Hoard

In 1945, a hoard was found in a pot unearthed in Sarnakounk, 120 km from Artaxata, in the Sissian region of modern Armenia.¹⁶⁵ This hoard was initially dispersed by the villagers and it was not until two decades later that 373 of the coins (all silver and falling between 330s BC and 31 BC) were gathered and placed in the History Museum of Armenia (IGCH 1746). The reassembled hoard contains 10 silver Artaxiad coins (3 tetradrachms and 5 drachms of Tigranes II; 2 drachms of Artavasdes II), with the remainder being a collection of Roman Republican (225), Seleucid (58), Phoenician (39), Parthian (22) and other coins from the region of Asia Minor and Greece.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ A list for these can be found in Mousheghian, Mousheghian, and Depyrot 2000.

¹⁶⁵ For a publication of this hoard see Mousheghian 1973.

¹⁶⁶ Caution should be used in interpreting this hoard since it is not fully in its original state.

¹⁶⁷ Seyrig 1955, 85-128.

¹⁶⁸ Mousheghian, Mousheghian, and Depyrot 2000, 101-102.

Nisibis Hoard

The hoard of Nisibis was found in 1955 containing 624 bronze coins (including one *fourré* denarius).¹⁶⁷ The date of the coins in the hoard range from 147 - 32/31 BC. The hoard contains 11 Artaxiad coins all of which are of the left facing Tigranes represented by all four reverse types.

Parakar Hoard

In 1959, a hoard containing 3 tetradrachms of Tigranes II and a tetradrachm of Artavasdes II was found in Parakar (Armavir province) located northeast of Artaxata. The hoard also contained a few denarii of the Roman Republic and a Parthian drachm.¹⁶⁸

'Parthian' Hoard

In 1963, Dr. Abgarians published an article on a large hoard of coins from Iran containing a single tetradrachm of Tigranes II.¹⁶⁹ Although a single tetradrachm is relatively unimportant to include in a general study of Artaxiad hoards, the coin is worth noting since it is of the comet-star variety. Because the mint which produced these coins is not yet known, perhaps the location of the find, Kumpat Kapousou in Iran, can provide some clues about the mint location.

Artaxata Hoard

In 1971, a hoard of 28 silver coins of Tigranes II (27 drachms and 1 tetradrachm) was unearthed during the excavations at Artaxata. The hoard came from a weapon's workshop located within the city walls.¹⁷⁰ All the coins in the hoard, including the single tetradrachm, bear the imperial title, with the exception of one drachm of the comet-star variety.¹⁷¹ Not much can be read

¹⁶⁹ Abgarians 1963. According to the author, the hoard was found in the 1950s and was composed of thousands of Persian, Parthian and Seleucid coins. No other information is provided.

¹⁷⁰ Arakelian 1984, 379.

¹⁷¹ Mousheghian 1978, Plate XII, coin no. 2.

into the contents of the hoard, as it is well known that the coins of Tigranes II with the imperial title were issued and used in Armenia. However, it is interesting to see that the drachm with the comet-star decoration was also found with the regular issues of Tigranes II. Because the drachm denomination is more often minted for local use, perhaps the find spot of this coin may indicate that this variety was minted in or near Armenia.

Other major hoards have been published by Bedoukian,¹⁷² Nercessian,¹⁷³ Foss¹⁷⁴ and Gökyıldırım.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, most of the documented hoards in the literature are adulterated and nothing is known of their provenance. Some 'hoards' have even been documented more than once, because they were circulated in the market and changed hands between dealers and collectors.¹⁷⁶ This creates an overlap in their documentation and consequently a confusion concerning their original source. Thus, except for the documented metrological data of these coins, they remain ineffectual when it comes to understanding mint locations, chronology and circulation of Artaxiad coins.

Of all the hoards mentioned above, only the Artaxata hoard comes from an actual excavation. Unfortunately, not much information can be retrieved from it except for stating the obvious that the silver coins of Tigranes II were in use in Armenia proper during his reign.

The Sarnakounk hoard, because it is not completely intact, should be dealt with cautiously in understanding monetary circulation in Armenia. Mousheghian concludes that the coins were most probably accumulated by an individual, perhaps a merchant, and uses this as an indication to suggest that silver coins from the entire region were in use in Armenia during the Hellenistic period.¹⁷⁷ However, it is a bit curious as to why there are only 10 Artaxiad coins out of the 373 coins. One

would assume that, if the coins belonged to a person from Armenia, more Artaxiad coins should have been in the collection. If the owner was a 'traveling' merchant, then the composition of the hoard should not be taken as a good indication of the monetary circulation at the time in Armenia, since most of the coins could have been collected from outside Armenia.

In a second study of this hoard,¹⁷⁸ new light has been shed on the possible circumstances of the accumulation of the coins. Because the biggest portion of the coins in the collection are denarii of the Roman Republic dating to the 2nd century BC, it is assumed that these coins were brought to Armenia at the time. According to this study, the second part of the collection was accumulated during the 1st century BC, as attested by the coins in the hoard dating to this period (such as the Artaxiad coins). Finally, it is believed that the coins were buried during the turmoil of the Roman campaigns of Mark Antony during the 30s BC. This second analysis suggests that the hoard was collected over several generations, most probably by a wealthy family. But the composition of the hoard does not necessarily show what kind of coins were circulating in Armenia at the time. Just as some of the coins were brought in from abroad, similarly other coins could have been accumulated in this manner. Therefore, the composition of the hoard cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of the coins in circulation in Armenia during the 1st cent. BC.

Conversely, and despite the lack of many hoards and documented find spots of coins from Armenia and the region, a general analysis of the monetary circulation in Armenia during the two centuries BC can be attempted with the information thus far in hand.¹⁷⁹ There is no evidence of minting or use of coins in Armenia dating to the Persian period.¹⁸⁰ The first evidence of use of coins in Armenia dates to the beginning of the Hellenistic

¹⁷² Bedoukian 1968b, 421-33; 1991, 6-13.

¹⁷³ Nercessian 2002, 91-96; 2000b, 55-91. 2000c, 12-54.

¹⁷⁴ Foss 1986a, 19-66.

¹⁷⁵ Gökyıldırım 2005, 19-44.

¹⁷⁶ For example the hoard documented by Foss, which after reaching New York was documented by Bedoukian only after parts of it were acquired by a museum in England.

¹⁷⁷ Mousheghian 1983, 263-268.

¹⁷⁸ Mousheghian, Mousheghian and Depuyrot 2000.

¹⁷⁹ Data in the following discussion is taken from Mousheghian 1983, 263-268.

¹⁸⁰ There exist only two silver coins of Miletos and one tetradrachm of Athens dating to the 6th to 5th centuries BC excavated in Armenia. However, these 3 finds are far too little to deduce any kind of monetary use or circulation in ancient Armenia (pp 11-16, coin nos 1-3).

period, starting with the use of silver coins of Alexander the Great. There is yet no evidence for the use of gold coins in Armenian territories. The first use of 'local' currency is attributed to the southwestern region of Armenia in the kingdom of Sophene during the late 3rd and early 2nd centuries BC. However, it should be noted that this coinage consisted only of bronze and had a limited circulation in that area only. No coins of Sophene have yet been found from Armenia proper.

The first evidence of local production of coinage in Armenia is that of the Artaxiad Dynasty in the early 1st c BC. However, this does not mean that coins were not known in Armenia prior to this date. As stated above, the idea of coinage was present in Armenia starting from the early Hellenistic period. But it was only with Tigranes II that coins in Armenia were minted.¹⁸¹ Although the Artaxiad Dynasty met its demise in the early 1st century AD, evidence has also shown that their coins remained in circulation up to the end of the 2nd century AD.

Approximately 60% of all the coin finds in Armenia are from the Seleucid Empire, covering the regions of Phoenicia, Syria and Asia Minor.¹⁸² The remaining coins are mostly Parthian. A change in this composition is brought about during the second half of the 1st century BC. The increasing presence of the Romans during this period, due

to the military campaigns of Crassus and Mark Antony, seems to have introduced the Roman denarii in the region (both Late Republican and Imperial). In addition to these Roman coins, there exist also Cistophori of western Asia Minor circulating in Armenia. During the 1st century AD, the most abundant coins in Armenia were the denarii of Augustus with the figures of his grandsons Gaius and Lucius. Although some numismatists¹⁸³ believe that these denarii were minted in Armenia, there is no proof of this thus far. By the 2nd century AD, Roman coins were relatively abundant, whereas Parthian coins were diminished significantly. Concerning provenance, generally speaking, Seleucid and Phoenician coins can be found near the southern borders of Armenia, with the Parthian issues concentrated in the central and eastern portions. In western Armenia, Roman coins are more abundant.

Even when the Artaxiads were issuing their own coins, money from abroad was still accepted and circulated in Armenia. As discussed above, finds have shown that coins from Syria, Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Parthia and Rome were in use in Armenia at the time. This may be taken as an indication that the monetary system in Armenia was not a closed one, as in the case of Egypt or Pergamum. This is especially true for the silver coins in all their denominations.

¹⁸¹ For the relevant discussion, see 'Chronology'.

¹⁸² For what follows data is obtained from Mousheghian, Mousheghian, and Depeyrot 2000, 7-9.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 8; HRAC, 65.

MINTS

There is no doubt that there must have been at least one mint in Armenia since, with the exception of Tigranes the Great, all the Artaxiad kings ruled solely in Armenia and must have issued coins there. The main mint is understood to have been located in the capital Artaxata.¹⁸⁴ In the case of Tigranes II, it is widely believed that the coins bearing the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ are from mints located within Armenian lands,¹⁸⁵ whereas the coins with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ come from mints in territories newly acquired, such as Antioch and Damascus.¹⁸⁶ In any event, it should be kept in mind that while the silver coinage had a wider range of circulation, the bronzes were generally intended for local use. The following is a list of mints where coins could have been issued:

Damascus

The coins of Tigranes II from the Damascus mint are confidently attributed to that city based on the representation of the seated Tyche on the reverse, which is a continuation of the same design used on the coins minted there by his predecessor Aretas III (84 - 72 BC)¹⁸⁷ (compare no. 24 with coin D).

Artaxata

It is highly likely that the capital of the Artaxiads served as the main mint. Coin finds from excavations of this ancient capital also verify this.

Antioch

It is widely believed that the tetradrachms of Tigranes II with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ were issued in Antioch. This is very likely since Tigranes II would have issued tetradrachms following the tradition of the Seleucid kings before him. Foss uses stylistic aspects on these tetradrachms to prove that they were minted in Antioch.¹⁸⁸ He specifically points to the use of small dots in the corners of the letters on the coins of Tigranes II, stating that this feature was also common on the coins of his predecessor Philip Philadelphus (coin E). The reverse type depicting the Tyche of Antioch, following the statue of Eutychedes of Sicyon standing in Antioch, is also an indication that they were minted in that city. However, unlike the silver coins, Foss does not agree with the attribution of bronzes of Tigranes II to this mint.¹⁸⁹ His argument is twofold: a) that during the period in which Tigranes II ruled in the city, Antioch continued to mint abundant 'autonomous' bronzes without a significant gap in their production, and b) of the 1,009 Seleucid coins excavated from that city, none belonged to Tigranes II.

Foss' argument, although plausible, is inconclusive. There is no reason why Antioch could not have issued both 'autonomous' issues and those of Tigranes II.¹⁹⁰ In fact, of the total 14,486 coins from the excavations, only 9 were of this 'autonomous' type, a small number for a coinage that was struck in 'abundance'.¹⁹¹ Although it is true that the absence of bronze coins of Tigranes II from excavations in Antioch can be taken as an indication that they were not issued there, it

¹⁸⁴ It should be borne in mind that there could have been different workshops working within the same city.

¹⁸⁵ This hypothesis can be backed by coin finds. See Foss (1986a, 27) for more details.

¹⁸⁶ Bedoukian 1968a, 53-54; Nercessian 2000c, 13.

¹⁸⁷ Newell 1939, 95-100.

¹⁸⁸ Foss 1986, 28.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁹⁰ Foss does not agree with this option on the grounds that

there would be 'no shortage' for Tigranes in using other mints for his bronze coinage. But Antioch was one of the main mints, if not the main mint, in the entire region. It would be prudent for Tigranes to use this well-established mint, both in terms of efficiency and 'technological' know-how, for the production of his coinage.

¹⁹¹ For the data of the coins excavated from Antioch refer to Waagé 1952, 24-25, 171. In fact, Waagé believes that Tigranes issued bronzes in Antioch during his rule (p. 24).

cannot be considered as conclusive proof that they were never issued there. Bearing in mind that the Tyche type with the royal title is very rare,¹⁹² perhaps it is the reason why they were not found in the excavations. Similarly, the Nike type bearing the royal title and having a star with two eagles is also relatively rare, with the elephant type of the same category being extremely rare. It seems unusual that the Armenian king issued silver but not bronze coins during his 15 years of rule in the city, whereas both silver and bronze coins were issued in Damascus during his brief 3 - 4 year presence there. Thus, the bronze coins with a star and two eagles and inscribed with the royal title may possibly be from the mint of Antioch.

Tigranocerta

Tigranocerta is also considered by some numismatists as an important mint. Foss indicates that the monogram **T** on some of the tetradrachms of Tigranes II may be that of Tigranocerta, but he himself states that this is more speculative than anything else. However, the idea that Tigranocerta functioned as a mint at all may be incorrect, since it is known through ancient historians that the newly planned capital was still under construction when it fell to the Roman forces.¹⁹³ Perhaps the mint there had not yet been operational. Since the site of Tigranocerta has not yet been discovered this issue remains unresolved.¹⁹⁴

Nisibis

The suggestion that Nisibis served as a mint is mostly based on the fact that the city was located on an important trade route, thus “such a place would have been most appropriate for a mint.”¹⁹⁵ This argument alone does not suffice to prove that Nisibis was indeed a mint for the Artaxiads. Foss proposes that the coins with field letters

ΔHMO may be attributed to Nisibis, on the grounds that ‘hoards’ from this region yielded a few Nike types with the above letters. However, the evidence that these Nike type coins do indeed come from Nisibis is questionable; they are more likely dealers’ accumulations from the region.¹⁹⁶ It is true that the hoard documented by Seyrig from Nisibis did contain 11 coins of the left facing Tigranes, but the hoard is composed of coins from surrounding regions (see above) and therefore it cannot be concluded that Armenian coins were minted there.

Military mint

The coins of Tigranes II overstruck on Aradian coins (see ‘Overstrikes and Countermarks’) beg the question whether they were intended as military pay for Tigranes’ traveling army. This seems logical, since Tigranes II would have needed to pay his ever expanding army, and it would have been more efficient to mint coins ‘on the road’. If this last assumption can be proven to be true, then this would imply that the coins with the imperial title were not necessarily minted exclusively on Armenian territory, since most of the overstruck coins bear the imperial title. Foss agrees with the idea of a ‘traveling military mint’ and assumes that the overstruck Tyche types without field marks or monograms may be the product of such a mint.¹⁹⁷

Comet-star mint

As mentioned above, a certain group of coins of Tigranes II have on the tiara a star with an elongated ray extending to the right, giving the appearance of a comet. Some scholars consider that the comet-star represents the passage of Halley’s Comet in 87 BC.¹⁹⁸ Foss states that these coins were minted in or near Armenia.¹⁹⁹ Keeping in mind that a drachm with a comet-star

¹⁹² ACV lists only 2 bronze coins of this type with the royal title as compared to 274 with the imperial title; a ratio of less than 1%.

¹⁹³ Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15; Appian *Mithridatic wars* 84.

¹⁹⁴ For an in-depth research on the possible location of Tigranocerta, refer to Holmes 1917, 120-138.

¹⁹⁵ Foss 1986a, 33.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 63, footnote no. 109.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 62.

¹⁹⁸ Gurzadyan and Vardanyan 2004, 4.6. Although the argument that the comet-star on the tiara may represent Halley’s Comet may seem irrelevant, nonetheless, if it can be shown to be true, it could be useful for determining the chronology of these coins.

¹⁹⁹ Foss 1986a, 28.

was found from Artaxata and a tetradrachm of the same variety from Iran, their find spots may back the argument that the comet-star mint could have been in the vicinity of Armenia. On the other hand, silver coins had a wide area of circulation, thus find spots of bronze coins of the comet-star variety would be more useful in determining the location of this mint.

Many of the coins with a comet-star decoration have on them the initials **ΔHMO** (or variations in the combination of these letters, such as **ΔHM**, **ΔH**, or **ΔM**). These letters could be an abbreviation for a mint or a magistrate. In any case, these letters are not exclusive to this category. There exist coins with the cornucopia reverse with such letters. This is intriguing since we know that the comet-star coins have the royal title, whereas the cornucopia type has the imperial title. Garabetian attributes the coins with these letters to the mint of Demetrias, the name given to Damascus

by Demetrius III (96 - 87 BC).²⁰⁰ He bases his argument on the assumption that **ΔHMO** is an abbreviated form of the city's name. Le Rider refutes this attribution stating that there is no evidence of other coins from Damascus using this abbreviation, coupled with the fact that the coins of Tigranes II minted at Damascus (seated Tyche left, standing Tyche, etc) differ in their style from the coins having the **ΔHMO** letters.²⁰¹

It should be noted that on the comet-star coins the shape of the tiara, with its elongated neck and ear flaps, is similar to the shape of the tiara on the coins minted in Armenia. In fact, there are also similarities in the style of the obverse portrait. Thus, with the few find spots documented to date and by comparing the similarities of the portrait on the two issues, it seems more plausible to place this mint in the northern territories of Tigranes' empire, perhaps in or near Armenia.

²⁰⁰ Garabetian 1957, 133-36.

²⁰¹ Le Rider 1960, 22-24.

CHRONOLOGY

Determining the chronology for Artaxiad coins is as difficult as attributing them to mints. The following is a discussion on when the Artaxiads started minting coins, followed by a proposed chronology for the coinage of Tigranes II.

The first coins of the Artaxiads

The most intriguing question is to know when the Artaxiad Dynasty started minting coins. It is not at all illogical to assume that the first Armenian king to mint coins was Tigranes II, as there is no concrete evidence showing that his predecessors issued coins.

Tigranes II issued coins at Antioch following the tradition set by the kings of the Seleucid Dynasty to partly legitimize his rule over the Seleucid domain and partly as a result of his introduction to the Hellenistic world. It may also be possible that Tigranes minted the substantial amount of tetradrachms in Antioch in an attempt to transfer the silver coins to his new capital Tigranocerta. After all, he had embarked on a massive building project there which would require huge amounts of capital. We know from historical sources that Tigranocerta was already laden with wealth, even before it was fully constructed. Why did Lucullus decide to besiege and attack Tigranocerta first and not Antioch, the capital of the Seleucid empire and Tigranes II's seat of power? Did the Roman general have information of wealth stored in Tigranocerta? Historians speak of a booty of 8,000 talents taken by Lucullus and his men,²⁰² a significant amount, and this was in a city which had not yet been fully constructed. Additionally, all this plunder took place *after* Tigranes II had managed to evacuate his family and part of his wealth from the city.²⁰³

Tigranes II managed to conquer, or indirectly control, a good portion of the former Seleucid domain. He also managed to humiliate the Parthians by acquiring the title 'King of Kings'.

Undoubtedly, he must have had a significant treasury to run his empire and, most important of all, to finance his army, which is estimated to have been 70,000-80,000 soldiers strong.²⁰⁴ This inevitably raises the question as to how Tigranes managed to pay his troops before acquiring Antioch (and thus before minting coins). This should not be a difficult issue to solve. He could have resorted to distributing payment in raw materials, such as silver, or possibly could have redistributed the booty plundered from the successful campaigns. But most logical of all, Tigranes could have used currency which already could have had a well established circulation in Armenia and the region. In this case it is most probable that Parthian currency was one of the main coinages used for this purpose.

Coinage of Tigranes II

Bedoukian states that Tigranes II started issuing coins in Armenia, using the title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ, from the very first decade of his reign (95-85 BC). He also states that the coins inscribed ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ were issued after 85 BC, when the king claimed the title 'King of Kings'.²⁰⁵ The author remarks that the bronzes with the Tyche type of Tigranes II with the royal title have "a very young, almost boyish portrait of the king"²⁰⁶ and therefore attributes these coins to an early period, issued prior to the acquisition of Antioch. Consequently, he considers that the figure on the reverse represents the Tyche of Artaxata. However, a young looking portrait does not necessarily imply an early period. It may simply be the result of the die engravers trying to portray an idealized portrait of the king, a tradition which is not uncommon. Keeping in mind that these coins represent a seated Tyche similar to the tetradrachms and like them bear the title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΙΓΡΑΝΟΥ, the fact that they could have been minted *after* the acquisition of Antioch seems more plausible. If Tigranes II started minting coins after 83 BC

²⁰² Plutarch *Lucullus* 29.3.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Manandian 1963, 200. Ancient historians give figures as high as 300,000 - 500,000 (Josephus *Jewish antiquities*

13.16.4), but this figure is an exaggeration.

²⁰⁵ CAA, 13.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

(that is after acquiring Antioch), it is possible that he introduced the concept of coinage to Armenia *after* this date or perhaps as late as 69 BC, the date of his withdrawal from Syria. This seems plausible when considering that the silver coins of the king issued in Armenia are inscribed with regnal years corresponding to the end of his reign.²⁰⁷

For the time being, the only coins of Tigranes II which can be dated with certainty are the tetradrachms of Damascus. As discussed above, this is due to the existence of numbering in the exergue of the reverse, representing dates based on the Seleucid Era as follows: AMΣ (72/71 BC), BMΣ (71/70 BC), ΓMΣ (70/69 BC). These tetradrachms were clearly struck during a period when he controlled the city.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ There exist letters on the tetradrachms and drachms with the imperial title interpreted as regnal years from 33 to 39 (corresponding to 62/61 - 56/55 BC).

²⁰⁸ History does not tell us when Tigranes II's rule in Damascus started, but it is known that the king's dominance there ended in 69 BC due to Lucullus' invasion.

METROLOGY AND DENOMINATION

Metrology

The silver coins of the Artaxiads were struck with relative uniform weights and sizes. The tetradrachms of Tigranes II and Artavasdes II have an average weight of 15 - 16 grams, with the drachms being mostly between 3.5 - 4.0 grams.

Concerning the bronze issues, the picture is confusing. This is partly due to the fact that there was no consistency in the weights of the bronzes and partly due to the use of numerous reverse types for each king. Because the coins of Tigranes II are the most abundant, their metrological data is tabulated below:

Metrology of the coins of Tigranes II				
reverse type	minimum weight (gr)	average weight (gr)	maximum weight (gr)	average size (mm)
Tetradrachms				
Tyche	12.1 ²⁰⁹	14.9-16.1 ²¹⁰	17.8 ²¹¹	25-28
Drachms				
Tyche	3.2	3.6-4.2 ²¹²	4.4	19-20
Bronzes				
Tyche	2.7	6.2-7.5	11.1	19-21
Nike	2.3	5.2-6.3	13.9	17-20
Heracles	2.6	4.2-4.6	7.6	16-18
cornucopia	1.4	2.3-3.1	5.4	14-15
palm	2.1	3.8-4.6	7.0	16-18
wheat	1.0	1.8-2.3	3.0	11-13
tripod	2.0	2.6-3.4	5.0	14-15
horse	1.4	1.7-2.0	2.4	12-14
seated Tyche (Damascus)	4.1	6.7-7.5	9.3	19-21
standing Tyche (Damascus)	1.2	4.1-4.5	6.3	15-17
Nike (Damascus)*		2.7		
quadriga*		2.3, 6.7		
seated Zeus*		1.4, 1.6		
tree*		2.1, 3.9, 4.7		
elephant*		4.0, 5.4, 6.0, 7.0		
club*		2.2, 4.1, 4.6		

Table 1: Weights and sizes of silver and bronze coins of Tigranes II (types marked with an asterisk represent rare issues, thus only the weights of individual coins are listed and not the averages).

²⁰⁹ This is in the case of a tetradrachm from the Damascus mint (CAA coin no. 14).

²¹⁰ The average weight of 559 tetradrachms from the mint of Antioch is 15.50 grams (Nercessian, 2000f, 93-94).

²¹¹ Listed in CNG Mail Bid Auction 27 (September 29, 1993).

²¹² The average weight of 128 drachms is 3.82 grams (Nercessian 2000f, 95-96).

With a quick look at the data tabulated above, one can observe that there was no consistency in the weights and sizes of the coins within the same type group. As a consequence, we have coins weighing twice as much as others, even though they are of the same type. However, looking at Table 1, it can be noticed that there is a certain correlation between the weights and sizes of the different reverse types. Thus we have certain types struck mostly on larger flans, whereas other types were struck mostly on smaller flans, (although some exceptions and variations do exist).

The vast majority of the silver and bronze coins of the Artaxiads, with the exception of overstrikes, have a die axis between 11h and 1h. This implies that although the coins were not struck using hinged dies, sufficient care was taken by mint-masters to assure that the orientation of the anvil and punch dies were aligned.

Concerning die studies of the tetradrachms of Tigranes II from the Antioch mint, both Nercessian²¹³ and de Callatay²¹⁴ have shown that all the existing specimens thus far known (struck from 69 anvil dies) indicate that up to 97% of the obverse dies have been attested for by using Esty's and Carter's methods of calculation.²¹⁵ However, concerning the reverse, the existing specimens struck from 463 punch dies cover only two-thirds of the dies used to strike these coins.

Denominations

In the case of the silver coins of the Artaxiads it is rather easy to determine their denominations, since they were struck with relatively uniform weights. The tetradrachms were based on the Attic standard. On the question concerning the denomination of the bronzes, the picture is not nearly as clear as for the silver. In the following

discussion the bronze coins of Tigranes II will be used since they are the most abundant. As stated above, there seems to be a correlation between types and weights/sizes. This is more apparent with some types, such as the cornucopia type, and not applicable to others, for example, the Tyche type.

Bedoukian has used the weight of the coins as an indication of their denomination and has come up with a system of a classification of 4, 2 and 1 chalci used by E T Newell.²¹⁶ Bedoukian's classification is as follows:²¹⁷

- 6 - 8 grams = 4 chalci
- 4 - 5 grams = 2 chalci
- 2.5 - 3.5 grams = 1 chalcus
- 1.5 grams and less = 1/2 chalcus

Bedoukian's classification of the bronzes into 4, 2, 1 and ½ chalci does not seem plausible.²¹⁸ As there is yet no evidence from any epigraphic sources referring to the denominations of ancient Armenian coins, and since there do not seem to be any marks of value inscribed on the coins themselves, one should be cautious in defining such strict denomination values.²¹⁹ Bedoukian's classification suggests that there were several denominations associated with a single type, say for example the Tyche type. This of course would imply that the weight of these coins, and not the image on them, were used to denote its value. This creates a problem since we know that this type was not divided into distinct categories of specific weights and sizes, making it difficult for the people in antiquity to differentiate between the values of each coin of the Tyche type they possessed.²²⁰

²¹³ Nercessian 2000f, 97-99.

²¹⁴ de Callatay 1997, 223.

²¹⁵ Esty 1986, 185-215; Carter 1983, 195-206.

²¹⁶ Newell 1938, 270-74. Newell based his system on the coins of Antiochus IV (175-164 BC) having the letters ΔX, ΒΧ and ΑΧ inscribed on them, where the coins in question have average weights roughly twice the other.

²¹⁷ CAA, 18.

²¹⁸ Bedoukian also acknowledges that variations and exceptions do exist.

²¹⁹ Vardanyan (2001) refers to a bronze coin of Artaxias II having the field letters XP on the reverse (which he interprets as being XB) and states that it is a mark of the coin's value of 2 chalci. This idea put forward by Vardanyan remains inconclusive because first, it is based on a single specimen and second, the inscription does not clearly and incontestably read XB.

²²⁰ The Tyche type has a weight range of 3-11 gr, without any apparent gaps in between.

Foss, in his study of the denominations of the bronze coins of Tigranes II, correlated the weight, size and type of the coins, and reached the conclusion that there is “little doubt that the image on the coins was one of the indications of its value.”²²¹ But if this is simply the case, then why is it that we have such a wide weight range for a single type? If a coin of the Tyche type weighing 8 grams was equivalent in value to a coin of the same type weighing 4 grams, then why was this type struck using mostly the heavier weight? It would have been much wiser and more economical to strike them in the smaller weight range, as long as people were willing to accept the lighter as equal in value to the heavier piece. After all, bronze is a commodity and it comes with a price. Even if we are to assume that this metal was cheap in antiquity, it still would have made a considerable difference if a coin type was struck on light blanks as opposed to heavy ones. These coins were issued in their millions, and therefore tons of the raw materials were needed. As we have seen, there was no strict control regarding the weights of individual coins of a specific type. But why was this the case? Perhaps an explanation could be that bronze coins were minted in ‘batches’. To provide a hypothetical example, suppose 50 coins of the Tyche type would be made from one pound of bronze, whereas from the same amount of metal 100 Heracles types would be struck and 200 coins of the cornucopia type. This would imply that

moneyers were restricted to minting a specific number of coins from a given amount of raw material, without necessarily having to worry about the weight of individual specimens. This would explain the variations in flan size and weight for coins of the same types.

Therefore, with such wide variations in weight, one can assume that it was the type depicted on the coins which was the main indicator of its denomination. To support this assumption even further, the bronze coins from the Damascus mint could be useful, since it seems very likely that they were minted in a single mint, or by a group of workshops representing a single mint. The three types thus far known – seated Tyche, standing Tyche and Nike – were struck with weights averaging roughly 7, 4.5 and 3 grams respectively. This indicates that three denominations were used, each having a different type to facilitate in distinguishing the value of each coin. This method of determining the denomination using the reverse type also holds true when considering the overstruck coins of Tigranes II (see ‘Overstrikes and Countermarks’). The Tyche type of Tigranes II has been overstruck on mostly heavy host coins, averaging 8.8 gr, whereas the Heracles type was overstruck on lighter coins averaging 5.3 gr.²²² Consequently, a simplified classification may be attempted regarding the denominations of the bronze coins of Tigranes II by dividing them into one, half and quarter ‘units’.²²³

²²¹ Foss 1986a, 54.

²²² Nercessian and Saryan 2000, 168.

²²³ It should be noted that there is no evidence of the term *chalcus* being used in Armenia.

Denominations			
Category	One unit	Half unit	Quarter unit
Imperial title: Star and two eagles	Tyche	Heracles	Cornucopia Wheat Quadriga*
Royal title: Star and two eagles	Tyche	Nike	Elephant*
Royal title: Comet-star	Tyche	Standing Tyche Palm Nike	Tripod Horse Club* Tree*
Royal title: Star and volute	Seated Tyche	Standing Tyche	Nike*

Table 2: Relation of types and denominations for the bronze coins of Tigranes II (types marked with an asterisk are only tentatively placed in the table since they are rare issues).

A quick look at Table 2 will reveal that for the smallest denomination more than one type is attributed. This may be an indication that there could have been even smaller sub-divisions in the form of 1/8 and 1/16 units.

Metallurgy

The metallurgy of the silver issues of the Artaxiads is unfortunately not well researched. Bedoukian has documented that the tetradrachms of Tigranes II minted in Antioch have a 62-75% purity. Interestingly, he notes that the tetradrachms minted in Artaxata have a significantly higher purity of 90%.²²⁴ Concerning the metallurgy of bronze coins, Saryan²²⁵ has conducted a chemical analysis using SEM-EDS on a single bronze coin of Tigranes II with a Tyche reverse and obtained

the following result: copper = 42.69%, lead = 48.99%, tin = 6.24%, silicon = 1.48%, aluminum = 0.36%, iron = 0.24%. The results are surprising due to the high lead content. The coin seems to have been alloyed with equal portions of copper and lead. Although most ancient coins do have a considerable portion of lead in them, this figure is quite high. It would be premature to draw any conclusions from the analysis of a single coin.

As can be seen from the few examples above, the metallurgical study of Artaxiad coins is still an area which needs much improvement. Understanding the composition of these coins can provide us with an understanding of the economical factors prevailing at the time. But most of all, they can be very useful in determining the mints, or at least the regions, in which they were issued.

²²⁴ CAA, 44. The author used the specific gravity method of estimating fineness.

²²⁵ Saryan 1995, 23-24.

MONOGRAMS AND FIELD MARKS

There is yet no consensus on the meaning of the monograms found on Artaxiad coins. All scholars who have studied these coins have been unable to explain the purpose of these field marks, the majority of which can be found on the tetradrachms of Tigranes II. It would be easy to think of these monograms as symbols representing the mints where the coins were minted, but even if this was the case, there is yet no evidence linking a specific monogram to a particular mint. Some numismatists propose

that the monograms ⌘ and ⌘ represent the mint of Artaxata, but this attribution remains an assumption until further evidence emerges.²²⁶ The suggestion that these monograms could represent control marks by celators or magistrates may be a better explanation.

The table below lists the monograms and field letters found on the coins of Tigranes II. This list was collected from as many sources as possible using coin illustrations in books, articles, on-line databases and both private and public collections.

Tetradrachms					
Imperial title - star and 2 eagles					
Reverse type	Above palm	Below palm	On rock	Behind Tyche	Exergue
Tyche	Δ (?)	A (or Λ)			
	Z Λ				EK
	Z Λ	A			EK
	Z Λ	Δ			EK
	H Λ				EK
	$\Theta\Lambda$				
Royal title - star and 2 eagles					
Reverse type	Above palm	Below palm	On rock	Behind Tyche	Exergue
Tyche		⌘	⌘		
		\circ , \circ , \circ ²²⁷	⌘		
			⌘		
		⌘ , ⌘ , ⌘ , ⌘	⌘		
			⌘		
		⌘ , ⌘ , ⌘			
		A	⌘		
			⌘ ²²⁸		

²²⁶ For example, the monogram ⌘ can also be found on the coins of the Seleucids.

²²⁷ It should be noted that field marks such as ⌘ or ⌘ or ⌘ , ⌘ or ⌘ , ⌘ or ⌘ , A or ⌘ or ⌘ , may all be variations of the same monograms or letters. They are most probably carelessly engraved, or poorly struck,

representations of the same symbol.

²²⁸ On some specimens of this variety, the palm branch is depicted having an elongated stem tied with a ribbon. Some scholars see this as a tiller held by Tyche. Additionally, some dies of this group bear a dot (.) in the field below the palm.

			⊕ / ⚡		
		H	M	Δ ²²⁹	
		H	M	* / Δ	
		H	M	⚡ ²³⁰ / Δ	
			A / M		
			A		
	A	⚡			
			Ⓜ		
Royal title - star and volute					
Reverse type	Outer left field: Above	Outer left field: Below	Left field	Right field	Exergue
Tyche	N		A		AMΣ
	⚡	ΘE/OΦ	A		BMΣ
	⚡	ΘE/OΦ	A		ΓMΣ
	⚡	K / †	A		(off flan)
Royal title - comet star					
Reverse type	Above palm	Below palm	On rock	Behind Tyche	Exergue
Tyche	Π				ΔHMO
		H		Δ	
					ΣΩ

Drachms					
Imperial title - star and 2 eagles					
Reverse type	Above palm	Below palm	On rock	Behind Tyche	Exergue
Tyche	ΓΛ, ΔΛ, ΕΛ, ζΛ, ΖΛ, ΗΛ, ΘΛ	A, B, Γ, Δ, E, ζ, Z, H, Θ, I, IB (?), K, Λ, O			ΞK, ΞC
	⚡	A		A	
Royal title - comet star					
Reverse type	Above palm	Below palm	On rock	Behind Tyche	Exergue
Tyche	Π				
		M			

²²⁹ It is worth noting that the tetradrachms with these field marks (ACV coin no. 36) have a reverse similar to the Antiochene group and yet the obverse is very similar to the

tetradrachms minted in Artaxata.

²³⁰ It is unclear if this is a monogram, an anchor or the Greek letters Φ over υ.

Bronzes					
Imperial title - star and 2 eagles					
Reverse type	Upper left field	Lower left field	Upper right field	Lower right field	Exergue
Tyche			☩	A	
	Δ			H/A	
	Δ			H	
Heracles	A		☩		
	☩		A		
	Δ		H		
					M (or H)
Cornucopia	Δ		H	A	
		Δ		H	
		☩		A	
					ΔH
Wheat		Δ		H	
				☩	
				A	ΔH
					ΔH
Quadriga					
Seated Zeus					
Royal title - star and 2 eagles					
Reverse type	Outer left field	Outer right field	Inner left field		
Tyche					
Nike			A		
	Δ	H			
	Δ/H	M			
	Δ/H/M				
	ΘΛ				
Elephant					
Royal title - star and volute					
Reverse type	Outer left field	Inner left field	Exergue		
Seated Tyche	☩				
	ΘE/OΦ				
	N				

Standing Tyche	ⲗ				
	ΘE/OΦ				
Nike	ΘE/OΦ				
Royal title - comet star					
Reverse type	Upper left field	Lower left field	Upper right field	Lower right field	Exergue
Seated Tyche					
Standing Tyche					
Nike					ΔHM
Palm					ΔM
					ΔHM
					ΔHMO
Tripod					H
					ΔHMO
Horse			ΔHMO		
	ΔHMO				
	M				
Tree					ΘΛ
Club					ΛΓ

Table 3: List of monograms and field letters on the coins of Tigranes II.

A look at Table 3 will show that there are particular field marks associated with particular categories. Thus, the grouping of the coins into categories according to the legend and the decoration on the tiara is consistent with the monograms and field letters found on them as well. It is also interesting to note that some of the above monograms can also be found on coins of the Seleucid kings from the Antioch mint. The following is a list of such cases:²³¹

- ⲗ : Antiochus III; Antiochus IV; Alexander I; Antiochus VII; Philip Philadelphus.
- ⲗⲗ : Seleucus IV; Alexander I; Antiochus VI.

- ⲗⲗ : Antiochus III; Antiochus IV; Antiochus XI; Philip Philadelphus.
- ⲗ : Antiochus X.
- ⲗⲗ : Antiochus III; Antiochus IV; Demetrius I.

As of yet, there do not exist any monograms on the obverse of the coins of the Artaxiads. However, a prominent letter A can be found behind the king's head on some of the coins. The significance of this letter remains unclear.²³² The following is a list of cases where it is found:

- Tigranes II: Nike, elephant, tree and club types.²³³
- Artavasdes II: Nike and tree types.

²³¹ For a thorough list, refer to Newell 1917, 137-151.

²³² Kovacs (2004, 84) proposes that these coins may be from

the mint of Aradus, but the argument is not convincing.

²³³ Note that all these types bear the royal title.

OVERSTRIKES AND COUNTERMARKS

Overstrikes

The majority of the overstruck coins of Tigranes II are of the Tyche type, but they are also attested for the Nike, Heracles and cornucopia types.²³⁴ The majority of the host coins are from the Phoenician cities, most notably Aradus.²³⁵ These coins have an obverse depicting the veiled bust of Astarte and a reverse depicting a humped bull galloping to left, dating to the period between 94 - 75 BC. These overstrikes do not necessarily indicate that Tigranes II controlled the Phoenician island, but it may imply that Tigranes got hold of the mainland territories, where Aradian coins circulated widely. It is also worth noting that the vast majority of the overstruck coins bear the imperial title, which is understood to have been minted in Armenia.²³⁶ Perhaps Tigranes acquired these Aradian coins as tribute and had them transported to Armenia, where they were overstruck. From the undertypes with a legible date it can be shown that the host coins belong to a time period spanning from 146-69 BC. This is a good indication that Tigranes acquired the coins during his campaigns until his withdrawal from Syria and Phoenicia in 69 BC. But if we are to consider that in antiquity the value of bronze was not significant, then would it have been worthwhile to transport these coins all the way to Armenia, a distance of more than 1,000 km? Conversely, if we are to assume that they were overstruck in Aradus and paid as tribute to Tigranes II, again we are faced with the same problem of transportation. It could also be possible that these Phoenician coins were the booty or pay given to the Armenian soldiers, who brought them back to their homeland and subsequently had them exchanged and thus re-struck as local Armenian currency. The second largest overstruck group of coins

belongs to Artavasdes II. These coins are mostly of the Nike type overstruck on Aradian coins.²³⁷ This would imply that coins from Aradus were indeed transported to Armenia by Tigranes II, and in great quantities, as they were still available during the time of Artavasdes II. Alternately, it could have been the case that Armenia was short of the raw materials used for producing bronze coins and therefore had to 'import' coins to be overstruck. It should be noted that the aspect of overstriking coins, instead of melting them down and re-striking them, could be an indication that they were needed in haste. If we are to consider the argument that Tigranes introduced the idea of minting coins in Armenia after he withdrew to the homeland in 69/68 BC, could it be that Armenian mints were not fully ready for coin production at first and had to rely on the method of overstriking?²³⁸

Countermarks

Only very few Artaxiad coins have countermarks on them, the significance of which is unknown. The following is a list of countermarks which occur in more than one case on a coin type.²³⁹

1. 'Tigranes I':

The countermark APK (believed to be in Greek, but Latin should not be ruled out) is quite common for the tree type of this king. The meaning and purpose of this countermark remains unexplained (see no. 1).²⁴⁰

2. Tigranes II:

- Tyche type: **N** to the right of the palm branch; **Δ** to the left of the king's head.
- Nike type: **☒**, **Λ**, **X** to the left of the king's portrait.
- Heracles type: **∨** situated to the left of Heracles' head.

²³⁴ Nercessian and Saryan 2000, 163, 171.

²³⁵ Other cities include, but are not limited to, Tripolis, Marathus and Berytus.

²³⁶ There exist some overstruck coins bearing the royal title, but there are no known overstruck coins from the Damascus mint.

²³⁷ Nercessian and Saryan 2000, 163.

²³⁸ Keeping in mind that there is no evidence for the use of bronze coins in Armenia before Tigranes II.

²³⁹ For a list of all known countermarks and markings on Artaxiad coins, refer to Nercessian and Saryan 2000, 200-204.

²⁴⁰ Seyrig (1955, 103, 118) considers this to be an abbreviation for APKA (read *Arka*), which is the Armenian word for king.

CONCLUSION

One of the major difficulties in the study of ancient Armenian coins is determining the mints. Unfortunately, almost no progress has yet been made in this respect, since most of the coins appear in the market and their find spots remain obscure. One possible way of solving this problem is to research the metallurgy of Artaxiad coins. The chemical analysis of a significant number of coins could be helpful in determining the regions or cities where they were issued. In the meantime, it is best to make the most of what one already has. A considerable number of ancient Armenian coins – whether in museums, private collections or with dealers – remain unrecorded. A systematic

documentation of these coins may compensate, in some measure, for the absence of data from regular archaeological excavations.

Despite the many difficulties and unresolved issues which still hamper the study of the coinage of the Artaxiad Dynasty, a reasonable amount of progress has been made on this subject during the past four decades and a good deal of material has been published. However, because most of this research is widely scattered in various books and journals, written in several languages, it was this article's goal to collect all the material into a single body of work. It is hoped that this comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the work done on this material has brought us closer to answering some of the questions regarding Artaxiad coins.

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KEY TO COIN FIGURES

1. 'Tigranes I'/tree. AE 3.43gr. HRAC 92/A.
2. 'Tigranes I'/Zeus. AE 3.52gr. CNG 36, 540.
3. 'Tigranes I'/standing figure. AE 6.40gr. HRAC 95/A.
4. 'Tigranes I'/Nike. AE 4.72gr. HRAC 94/B.

5. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR tetradrachm 16.20gr. HRAC 81.
6. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR tetradrachm 15.70gr. CNG 70, 368.
7. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR tetradrachm 15.39gr. CNG Triton XI, 286.
8. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR tetradrachm 16.01gr. Spink sale 3014, 122.
9. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR drachm 4.06gr. CNG 58, 746.
10. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR drachm 3.39gr. HRAC 34.
11. Tigranes II/bigá. AR fractional drachm 2.10gr. SCADA, plate 89, no. a46-pla.
12. Tigranes II/elephant. AR fractional drachm 3.10gr. SCADA, plate 89, no. a44-pla.
13. Tigranes II/Tyche. AR fractional drachm 2.95gr. SCADA, plate 89, no. a43-pla.
14. Tigranes II/Tyche. AE 6.18gr. G&M 134, 1571.
15. Tigranes II/Heracles. AE 5.57gr. G&M 165, 1389.
16. Tigranes II/cornucopia. AE 2.85gr. CNG 64, 360.
17. Tigranes II/wheat. AE 2.03gr. HRAC 48/A.
18. Tigranes II/quadríga. AE 6.65gr. HRAC 129.
19. Tigranes II/seated Zeus. AE 1.59gr. CNG 36, 635.
20. Tigranes II/Tyche. AE 5.07gr. ACV 47.
21. Tigranes II/Nike. AE 7.55gr. CNG e-sale 151, 78.
22. Tigranes II/Nike. AE 3.17gr. Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 120, 173
23. Tigranes II/elephant. AE 4.0gr. ACV 116.
24. Tigranes II/seated Tyche of Damascus. AE 6.37gr. CAA 110.
25. Tigranes II/standing Tyche of Damascus. AE 4.60gr. CAA 112.
26. Tigranes II/Nike of Damascus. AE 2.67gr. CAA 113.
27. Tigranes II/seated Tyche. AE 8.08gr. CNG 36, 583.
28. Tigranes II/standing Tyche. AE 4.53gr. HRAC 20.
29. Tigranes II/Nike. AE 5.53gr. CNG 60, 1013.
30. Tigranes II/palm. AE 5.72gr. HRAC 40/A.
31. Tigranes II/tripod. AE 2.51gr. CNG 82, 681.
32. Tigranes II/horse. AE 1.46gr. G&M 142, 1658.
33. Tigranes II/tree. AE 3.94gr. ACV 105.
34. Tigranes II/club. AE 3.08gr. G&M 122, 1514.

35. Artavasdes II/quadríga. AR tetradrachm 16.40gr. CNG 36, 607.
36. Artavasdes II/quadríga. AR drachm 3.77gr. HRAC 113/B.
37. Artavasdes II/Nike. AE 6.16gr. CNG 60, 1014.
38. Artavasdes II/tree. AE 6.97gr. HRAC 118.
39. Artavasdes II/wheat. AE 2.92gr. CNG 36, 615.

40. Artaxias II/Athena. AR drachm 3.59gr. CNG 51, 768.
41. Artaxias II/Nike. AR drachm 4.06gr. Freeman & Sear, Fixed Price List 6, F70.
42. Artaxias II/cornucopia. AE 3.84gr. ANJ 2001, plate 3, no. 1.
43. Artaxias II/bunch of grapes. AE 2.52gr. G&M 165, 1393.
44. Artaxias II/dog. AE 1.15gr. G&M 138, 1504.
45. Artaxias II/eagle. AE 0.97gr. ANJ 2008, plate 5, no. II-6.
46. Artaxias II/head. AE 3.54gr. G&M 165, 1394.
47. Artaxias II/bee. AE 2.70gr. G&M 138, 1506.

48. Tigranes III/standing figure. AR drachm 3.83gr. HRAC 125.
 49. Tigranes III/Nike. AR hemi-drachm 0.93gr. ACV 135.
 50. Tigranes III/biga. AE 6.44gr. HRAC 131.
 51. Tigranes III/thunderbolt. AE 3.59. CNG 36, 620.
 52. Tigranes III/horseman. AE 3.91gr. ANJ 2008, plate 4, no. 7.
 53. Tigranes III/eagle. AE 4.02. CNG 36, 619.
 54. Tigranes III/warrior. AE 3.6gr. CAA 139.
 55. Tigranes III/horse protome. AE 4.1gr. CAA 140.
 56. Tigranes III/horse. AE 6.48gr. CNG e-sale 168, 66.
 57. Tigranes III/elephant. AE 4.58gr. HRAC 136.
 58. Tigranes III/Nike. AE 5.11gr. ANJ 2004, plate 5, no. 3.
 59. Tigranes III/lion's head. AE 1.7gr. CNG 61, 898.
60. Tigranes IV/Nike. AE 2.52gr. CNG 46, 697.
 61. Tigranes IV/standing figure. AE 3.20gr. ACV 163.
 62. Tigranes IV/elephant. AE 4.74gr. ACV 172.
 63. Tigranes IV/elephant's head. AE 1.75gr. CNG 36, 630.
 64. Tigranes IV/eagle. AE 2.25gr. CNG 36, 626.
 65. Tigranes IV/Heracles. AE 3.85gr. CNG 36, 625.
 66. Tigranes IV/palm. AE 2.35gr. G&M 160, 1654.
 67. Tigranes IV/club and ax. AE 2.02gr. CNG 36, 628.
68. Artavasdes III/Athena. AE 6.81gr. CAA 160.
 69. Artavasdes III/perched eagle. AE 4.00gr. CNG 61, 902.
70. Tigranes IV-Erato/seated Tyche. AE 6.78gr. ANJ 2004, plate 5, no. 8.
 71. Tigranes IV-Erato/horse protome. AE 4.33gr. G&M 160, 1653.
72. Artavasdes IV/Augustus. AR drachm 3.70gr. HRAC 169.
 73. Artavasdes IV/Augustus. AE 6.65gr. ACV 181.
74. Tigranes V/Erato. AE 7.00gr. HRAC 163.
 75. Tigranes V/Augustus. AE 15.02gr. HRAC 167.
76. Uncertain/twin peaks. AE 5.81gr. G&M 160, 1656.
- A. Tigranes I/Nike. AE 5.00gr. ACV 23.
 B. Tigranes III/horse. AE 5.33gr. ACV 150.
 C. Tigranes III/horse. AE - gr. ACV 149.
 D. Aretas III/Tyche of Damascus. AE 8.23gr. CNG 64, 466.
 E. Philip Philadelphus/seated Zeus. AR tetradrachm 15.76gr. Freeman & Sear, Mail Bid Sale 15, 194.





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