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H. DANNENBERG,
H. DRESSEL, J. MENADIER.

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Nochmals das Stabkreuz.

In an interesting article in this Zeitschrift (XXV, p. 215 ff.), Dr. Assmann discusses the old question of the significance of the Stabkreuz on Greek Coins.

It may be admitted that he has disposed effectually of the older theories. It is also clear that the object is of a nautical character, and probable that it is some kind of standard. So far, Dr. Assmann's theory will probably be generally accepted. It remains to be seen whether his derivation of this particular type of standard from a Phoenician origin is equally acceptable. Briefly, his argument amounts to this: something of the same kind was borne on Phoenician ships, as shown on coins of Arados and Sidon, from the fifth century onwards. On the other hand it is not found in Greece before the time of Alexander the Great, on whose coins it is carried by Nike. So too it is carried by Nike on the well-known coins of Demetrios Poliorketes. After this time we find it at Histiaia alone in Greece Proper; at Phaselis, which was in close connexion with Phoenicia; and at various Phoenician cities.

Its occurrence at these places after the Macedonian period is not to be denied. I propose only to consider the statements (1) that the cruciform standard is found on early Phoenician coins (2) that it is not found in Greece before the time of Alexander.

(1). The form taken by the standard on early coins of Sidon is a staff supporting a crescent, or crescent and globe combined. A similar form is found on many of the early coins of Arados. Dr. Assmann states that the cruciform standard

coccurs on coins of Arados, "welche viel älter sind als Alexander und ein die Heckzierre des Schiffs überragendes (rechtwinkliges) Kreuz darstellen, so deutlich, dass Rouvier journ. intern. d'arch. numism. 3, 128 es unter demselben Namen, welchen Babelon bei den Münzen von Alexander und Histiaeum gebrauchte, als stylis cruciforme beschrieb". As a matter of fact Rouvier also describes under this heading, or under the words "même type", various specimens on which the standard is not cruciform, but of the crescent or crescent and globe kind already mentioned. There are however a few early Aradian coins on which the



Fig. 1
Fig. 2
Staters of Arados in the British Museum (2:1).

standard approximates to a cruciform shape. Even here, however, we cannot be certain that a cross is intended¹⁾. On one specimen (Fig. 1) the cross-piece is very short and thick; on another (Fig. 2) it is somewhat longer; but on all it would seem to be merely a modification or an unsuccessful representation of the crescent. On none does the standard very closely resemble the object on the coins of Alexander the Great.

1) I have examined a large number of coins of this class, either originals or in casts or photographic reproductions. The specimens here illustrated (enlarged to twice actual size) are in the British Museum.

(2). M. Babelon based his well-known argument as to the origin of the type of Alexander's gold coins on a Panathenaic amphora of the year 336—5 B. C. in the British Museum¹⁾. Dr. Assmann points out that the illustration of this vase in the *Monumenti* is untrustworthy. That is true; but, what is more, this portion of the vase has been disfigured by a restorer. Mr. Cecil Smith has kindly removed the plaster with which it was covered, and we now see that the object has a cross-bar, and that the shaft is topped by a knob. Comparison with the other Panathenaic vase of the same year in the British Museum²⁾ shows that the object there held by Athena herself is of the same shape. Dr. Assmann has condemned the illustration on which M. Babelon based his theory; it would have been prudent if he had enquired into the accuracy of the illustration in the *Monumenti* of this second vase, which he adduces as evidence against M. Babelon's view. He writes "Dort steht Athena selbst . . . und trägt im jenseitigen, unsichtbaren linken Arm ein Gerät, dessen Oberteil ein Kreuz ohne Spitze, aber mit Knopf (oder Ring), über dem Querarm bildet, während das Unterende, soweit es sichtbar, in einen spitzen, umgebogenen Haken ausläuft, so dass man sofort an einen Anker erinnert wird". An examination of the original shows that the supposed hook is really the left hand of Athena (!), and that the shaft of the object was prolonged considerably beyond the hand; distinct traces remain of the brown paint, which was originally covered with white. As regards the upper portion, the staff is, as on the other vase, terminated by a knob, but the general effect is that of a Latin cross. The resemblance to this object of the cross on the coins of Alexander is too close to be ignored; it is, at any rate, much closer than its resemblance to the standard on the early Aradian coins; and I think there can be no doubt that this form of standard was known in Greece at least as early as 336 B. C., whether it was of Phoenician origin or not.

1) Mon. d. Inst. X. 47b = Walters, B. M. Catal. Vases II B 608.

2) Mon. d. Inst. X. 47a = Walters B 607.

It is unnecessary for me to enter here into the consideration of the reasons for which, according to Dr. Assmann, Alexander adopted as his type the Nike carrying the cruciform standard. I may say only that if the standard was known in Greece as early as 336 B. C., it may have been adopted by Alexander merely as a symbol of sea-power, without special reference to the Phoenician fleet.

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G. F. Hill.
