

I The Numismatic Collection of Dr Władysław Semerau-Siemianowski in the National Museum in Warsaw

In 1921 Dr Władysław Semerau-Siemianowski donated to the National Museum in Warsaw an extremely valuable ancient collection, which comprised ancient and eastern coins, Byzantine seals and terracottas, cuneiform tablets and ancient glasses. The numismatic collection encompassed 27,711 items, most of which were ancient coins: 12,000 Greek, 7000 Roman and 3000 Byzantine,¹ as well as 158 Byzantine seals. At the time it was an impressive set. The National Museum's Ancient Numismatics Department owes its existence to this hugely generous donation.²

Władysław Semerau-Siemianowski (1849–1938) was a physician, a collector, numismatist, in some part also an archaeologist, a patriot and man of great caliber (**fig. 1**).³ For forty years in Turkey he created his collection, certain that he would pass it on to a Polish museum in a free Poland. Once Poland regained independence following the First World War, Semerau-Siemianowski made his decision to return to his homeland. On 19 March 1920 he left the Ottoman Empire for good. A year later, on July 2, he donated his collection to the National Museum in Warsaw in return for becoming the collection's honorary curator. He continued inventorying and studying the coins until 1928. He was assisted for eight years by Anna Doroszevska, Szemioth by marriage.⁴ It is mainly from her publications that we learn about his life and personality.

Semerau-Siemianowski was born in the family estate of Cierplewo in the Poznań province.⁵ He spent the early years of his life in Wielkopolska, graduating not without problems from

¹ The tradition of treating Byzantine coins, which refer for the most part to the medieval period, jointly with ancient coinage derives from the early years of research in this field and the view (rejected today) that the history of Byzantium was merely a continuation of that of Rome.

² Anna Szemiothowa, "Historia powstania Działu Numizmatyki Starożytnej Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie," *Biuletyn Numizmatyczny*, no. 4 (1955), pp. 1–16; ead., "Historia powstania Działu Numizmatyki Starożytnej Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 3 (1958), pp. 335–51; ead., "Gabinet Numizmatyczny (Dział monet starożytnych)," in *Straty kulturalne Warszawy*, Władysław Tomkiewicz, ed. (Warsaw, 1948), pp. 186–206. *Prace i Materiały Wydziału Rewindykacji i Odszkodowań*, no. 7; Stanisław Lorentz, "Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie. Zarys historyczny," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 1 (1938), p. 36.

³ For an extensive biography of Semerau-Siemianowski, see the present author's essay: *Dar Władysława Semerau-Siemianowskiego a początki muzealnej kolekcji monet antycznych*, to be published in a book planned by the National Museum on the beginnings of the collections.

⁴ An employee of the National Museum's Ancient Numismatics Department from 1921, curator in 1937–62.

⁵ Zofia Keler-Piğłowska, "Semerau-Siemianowski Władysław Wojciech," in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 36/2, no. 149 (Warsaw–Kraków, 1995), pp. 226–27.

secondary school, mainly due to being relegated a number of times for involvement in the freedom movement. Patriotic traditions must have run strong in his family, his mother's father having fought in the November Uprising; they definitely shaped the grandson's opinions and attitudes. In 1870 he enrolled in the university in Wrocław to study medicine, moving the next year to Krakow, to the Medical Faculty of Jagiellonian University, escaping thus conscription in the Prussian army. In Krakow, he attended for two years lectures in archeology held assumedly by Prof. Józef Łepkowski (1826–94), archeologist, historian and philosopher, who is historically confirmed as the first Polish professor of archaeology in the history of the discipline.⁶ In 1867, Łepkowski embarked upon organizing an Archaeological Cabinet with the Jagiellonian University,⁷ which was to become with time one of the most important scientific centers in the country. One of his biggest achievements was popularizing Polish archaeology internationally and among young enthusiasts. It must have been then that Semerau-Siemianowski became interested in antiquity and his collector's passion developed.

It was an age of conscious and informed collecting. Care was taken to make full descriptions of objects, take inventory notes and prepare catalogues. Semerau-Siemianowski drew on what he had learned in Krakow to form his own collection and later to inventory and study the coins that he passed on to the National Museum in Warsaw. His learning and numismatic experience are unquestioned, considering the professional character of the descriptions he made in museum inventory books and on individual register cards. Only a few are actually by his hand, but there can be no doubt that he dictated the content of these files.

From Krakow Semerau-Siemianowski moved after two years to Vienna, where he received his doctor's diploma at the university there in 1877. Shortly upon graduation he found himself in the Ottoman Empire. During the war between Turkey and Russia (1877–78) he served as an army doctor in the Turkish army. After the end of the war, in 1878–84, he held the post of a doctor with the Turkish railways, based in Rushchuk.⁸ His living conditions improved greatly as he gained repute as a doctor with the local inhabitants. It was then that he started to collect coins, out of pure fancy at first, then more and more professionally and with a deliberate scientific approach. From an amateur enthusiast he turned into a fully mature, scientific collector.

In 1884, he moved to Salonika (modern Thessaloniki),⁹ taking a higher position with the Turkish railways. While we do not know how big his collection was at this time, we do know that it was at this time that one of the most prized ancient pieces in it came his way – a large silver octodrachm of the Derrones (**fig. 2**), a tribe living in the northeastern Balkans. Like the other tribes from this area, the Derrones minted coins starting from the end of the 6th century, using locally found silver ores. Unlike the Greek cities, which issued tetradrachms, the local tribes struck very rare, large silver denominations (8-, 10- and even 12-drachm pieces). Such large pieces are presumed to have been intended not so much for circulation, as for paying taxes or tribute to the Persians who exercised control over the region.

⁶ Andrzej Abramowicz, *Historia archeologii polskiej XIX i XX wieku*, Warsaw–Łódź, 1991, pp. 40–44; Józef Kostrzewski, *Dzieje polskich badań prehistorycznych* (Poznań, 1949), pp. 34–44.

⁷ Cecylia Zofia Gałczyńska, "Historia zbioru zabytków archeologicznych w Muzeum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego," *Meander*, Ann 19, no. 10 (1964), pp. 452–63.

⁸ Now Ruse in Bulgaria. The Principality of Bulgaria created after the end of the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78) remained dependent on the Ottomans.

⁹ At this time Thessaloniki was still Ottoman; the city was incorporated into Greece in 1912, during the Balkan wars.

The obverse of the octodrachm bears a representation of a figure seated in a cart drawn by oxen and rising above it an eagle holding a turtle in its claws and the legend in retrograde: ΔΕΡΡΟΝΙΚΟΝ. The coin was found about 1890 near Doiran lake¹⁰ in what was once Derrones territory. According to reports, the doctor was given it in 1896 by a grateful patient.¹¹ It is a measure of the interest this coin evoked that Semerau-Siemianowski traveled the same year to the Numismatic Cabinet in Berlin to ask the opinion of specialists. Hugo Gaebler most likely saw it then and included a description of it in his article, indicating a private collection.¹² The coin was mentioned also in the work of a Greek numismatist, Svoronos, who reported that the coin came from a private collection and had been examined by Gaebler;¹³ it was also mentioned in Babelon's treatise.¹⁴ The Kaiser Friedrich-Museum in Berlin approached the doctor with a proposal to purchase the coin for their collection, but was refused. Semerau-Siemianowski offered the octodrachm to the National Museum in Warsaw by a separate bequest on 1 March 1926.

Semerau-Siemianowski studied and catalogued the coins that he collected for a while, but was later forced to give up these activities owing to the heavy work load that he had. His notes were all lost. It was only natural, considering where he resided, that issues from Eastern mints were the best represented in his collection. The coins came from different sources, most frequently from acquisitions, often as gifts from grateful patients, occasionally found personally by the doctor. He also accrued a professional library at home, ordering relevant books on archaeology and numismatics from Europe and purchasing auction catalogues. Not the least, he established contacts with other numismatists, carrying on a lively correspondence with them – a pity that none of his letters have survived.

Our understanding of the collection would hardly be complete without taking into consideration losses caused by the Second World War. The wartime fate of the collection comes up repeatedly in Szemioth's memoirs. The more valuable parts of the numismatic collection were hidden by the museum staff already in August 1939, but were uncovered and taken away by the Germans on October 23. In 1945, the Polish army found broken boxes with coins in Lower Silesia.¹⁵ The war losses in the ancient coin collection were huge, not so much in terms of quantity as in quality, as the missing pieces included the most valuable coins, rare ones and ones in mint condition, as well as those made of gold and electron. Nearly all the gold coins from the collection were lost, as were many valuable silver ones. All that remained were descriptions in the inventory books and in the doctor's files.

¹⁰ Situated on the border with Greece, Doiran is the third biggest lake within modern Macedonian borders.

¹¹ "Oktodrachma z napisem Derronikon," *Zapiski Numizmatyczne*, Ann 2, nos 3–4 (1926), pp. 53–58. No author is given. The information probably came from Anna Szemioth, who must have quoted Dr Semerau-Siemianowski. Szemioth also gives the year 1896 in her memoirs, but Gaebler's article citing the coin is from 1895, hence the situation must have taken place earlier than that.

¹² Hugo Gaebler, "Zur Münzkunde Makedoniens. Die Münzen der Derronen," *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, no. 20, (1895), pp. 294–95, no. 4.

¹³ Joannis Nikolaos Svoronos, *L'hellénisme primitif de la Macédoine. Prouvé par la numismatique et l'or du Pangée* (Paris–Athens, 1919), p. 7, no. 8.

¹⁴ Ernest Babelon, *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1907), p. 1047.

¹⁵ Aleksandra Krzyżanowska, "Z powojennych dziejów Gabinetu Monet i Medali," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 31 (1987), pp. 45–62; see also n. 2.

The following presentation of the collection will begin with the biggest and at the same time the earliest set in the collection, that is, the Greek coins, which originally counted some 12,000 pieces.

The first coins in mainland Greece appeared around the middle of the 6th century BC. In Semerau-Siemianowski's collection, the coinage of this region is represented modestly: mostly single coins from different mints. A larger number came from Athens, the so-called Athenian owls, that is, tetradrachms with the characteristic representation of a head of Athena and image of an owl. The oldest such coin can be dated to the 6th century BC, the others to the 5th–3rd century BC. The collection also contains single examples of drachmas and their fractions. Better represented are issues of tetradrachms of the “new style,” preserving the old motifs, but in an entirely new style. The coinage of Corinth is represented by silver staters with an image of Pegasus and head of Athena, whereas Boeotian Thebes had coins with the characteristic shield motif.

The collection of coins from Macedonia and Thrace is quite imposing, which is only right considering that Rushchuk and Salonika, where Semerau-Siemianowski spent a quarter of a century, lie in the territories of ancient Macedonia and Thrace. There are some single coins of the first Macedonian kings, but it is the coins of Philip II that make for a more substantial set. From the beginning of his reign this ruler struck in the mints at Pella and Amphipolis large numbers of tetradrachms with images of the head of Zeus and a horserider (**fig. 3**). Upon taking control of the gold-bearing land at the foot of Pangaios mountain, he started to issue gold staters with the head of Apollo and a *biga*. Four of these gold staters of Philip II in mint condition, three of which had been purchased in Constantinople, were among the war losses. As for the numerous bronze coins of this ruler, the files on many of these pieces bore the annotation that they were “found on the banks of the Granicus river.”

All the drachmas and tetradrachms struck by Alexander the Great bore the same type of image: the head of a young Heracles in lion's skin and an enthroned Zeus. Symbols and monograms on the reverse distinguished the individual mints, of which most of the working ones were represented in the collection. Only the silver and bronze pieces remained of the huge set of Alexander's coins in Semerau-Siemianowski's collection, the five gold staters with the head of Athena and Nike being lost. They were issued by different mints and were all purchased in Constantinople. Beside these five the collection also included an extremely rare double stater minted in Pella, pristine and weighing 16.40 gm.

The coins of rulers coming in Alexander's wake are represented more modestly. The largest number belonged to Phillip Arrhidaios, a few and sometimes a few dozen originated from the times of successive Antigonid kings. Very often the files for these coins contained notes about their purchase in Salonika.

Once Rome took over Macedonia, tetradrachms with a characteristic image of the head of Artemis in the middle of a Macedonian shield were issued in 168 BC. The collection included one such perfectly preserved coin (**fig. 4**).

The coins of Thrace are represented by a splendidly assembled set of issues of the following cities: Abdera, Anchialus, Apollonia, Bisanthe, Byzantium, Maroneia, Mesembria, cities of Thracian Chersonesus, moreover Perinthus and the island of Thasos, which belonged to Thrace. The coins of Byzantium, a city lying on the Bosphorus, are the most numerous, encompassing more than a hundred silver pieces with images of a bull and a dolphin. All were purchased in Constantinople, although it is not clear whether as a single assemblage (hoard?) or as a result of patient acquisition over the years. The homogeneity of the set and similar state of preservation could indicate a common provenience. Early silver staters from the end of the

6th century BC with a Satyr abducting a Maenad are among the coins of Thasos that merit special attention. Other interesting examples include bronze coins with the head of Heracles, bow and club, and tetradrachms with the head of Dionysos and a standing Heracles. Royal coins are represented foremost by issues of Lysimachos, who ruled Thrace after the death of Alexander the Great. His tetradrachms bore the head of a deified Alexander with the horn of Zeus Ammon and an enthroned Athena Nikephoros (**fig. 5**).

War losses, apart from a series of silver and bronze coins, comprised two gold staters, which were described however as “casts” in the files. Obviously the collection must have had its share of forgeries.

Rare coins included issues by Thracian kings of the 3rd century BC: Kavarus, Mostis and Adaios. One should also note issues of kings who were dependent on Rome, such as Roimetalkes I, II and III, reigning in the times of the first Roman emperors; some of these coins are in perfect condition, take for example a coin of Roimetalkes II with a bust of Tiberius on the obverse and a bust of the Thracian king and his wife Pythodoris on the reverse¹⁶ (**fig. 6**).

A set of perfectly preserved hemidrachms of the Achaean League, issued in 280–146 BC is also noteworthy. The coins had a characteristic monogram composed of the letters A and X and the name of the issuing city.

Semerau-Siemianowski moved to Constantinople in 1903 to take up his new position as chief physician of the Eastern Railways. His intermediary in buying coins was the Armenian antiquary Nishan Nishanian, whom he had treated successfully for a serious illness. The antiquary acted on commission from Semerau-Siemianowski, buying numismatics in the Greek cities of Asia Minor (the Doctor paid the antiquary’s travel and lodging on such occasions). The cards mention his name equally often as information that the purchase was made in Constantinople. The outbreak of the First World War actually helped in the development of the collection, because it cut the world antiquarian markets off from Constantinople. It was then that Semerau-Siemianowski collected the largest number of coins, including some of the most interesting pieces.

These included, among others, coins issued by the Seleukids and Lagids. Tetradrachms of the dynasty founder Seleukos I differed from those of Alexander only in the name of the king, which was changed. Successive reigns are represented by tetradrachms (beside the bronze coinage), which, starting from Antiochos I, bore a portrait of the reigning king wearing a diadem and diverse motifs on the reverse, from Apollo seated on an omphalos to various figures like Zeus, Tyche and Athena (**fig. 7**). The most impressive are perfectly preserved tetradrachms with portraits of Seleukid rulers. There is even a female portrait among these, that is an image of Kleopatra Thea, wife of Alexander Balas and mother of Antiochos VIII, depicted together with her son (**fig. 8**).

The set of coins from Syrian Palmyra, which counts more than a hundred pieces, consisted chiefly of the contents of a hoard discovered in Alexandria and purchased by the Doctor in the beginning of the 20th century in Constantinople.¹⁷ These small and unattractive copper

¹⁶ Yordanka Youroukova, *Coins of the Ancient Thracians*, translated from the Bulgarian by A. Athanassov (Oxford, 1976), pp. 98–99, pl. 24, 201–08. BAR Supplementary Series 4.

¹⁷ Aleksandra Krzyżanowska, “Trésor de monnaies palmyréniennes trouvé à Alexandrie,” in *Actes du 8^{ème} Congrès international de numismatique, New York–Washington, septembre 1973 / Proceedings of the 8th International Congress of Numismatics, New York–Washington, September 1973*, Herbert A. Cahn, Georges Le Rider, eds (Paris–Basel, 1976), publication no. 4, pp. 327–32, pl. 40; ead., “Mennictwo Palmyry,” *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, Ann 23, no. 3 (1979), pp. 143–54.

coins from the 2nd–3rd century, bearing images of Palmyrean gods, have fascinated researchers for years.¹⁸

Kurt Regling, curator of the Numismatic Cabinet in Berlin and a specialist in ancient numismatics, had the opportunity to see Semerau-Siemianowski's collection in 1918, when he visited the doctor in Constantinople. Dating to this visit are descriptions in Regling's hand, made on the small envelopes, in which the coins were kept, and a dedication in a book offered to the collector.¹⁹ Regling was interested especially in the Greek coins, which included many silver and bronze pieces that he knew nothing about. A gold stater of Antiochos VI with a portrait of the king in a radiate crown and Athena was a complete revelation to him. The coin has not been noted anywhere else; unfortunately, it was among the war losses.

The coinage of Egyptian kings is represented in the collection by silver and bronze coins from Ptolemy I to Kleopatra VII (although not all the representatives of the dynasty are illustrated). They were issued in Alexandria, but also outside Egypt, in Cyrenaica, on Cyprus, in Phoenicia and Palestine. Tetradrachms with regal portraits and large bronzes with a characteristic image of Zeus Ammon, accompanied on the reverse by an eagle on a thunderbolt, the Lagid dynasty's emblem, predominate. After Egypt was incorporated into the Roman Empire, the Alexandrian mint produced bronze and debased silver coins that are richly represented in the collection. These coins bore images of Roman emperors.

Coins of Asia Minor were the biggest single group in the collection. The earliest were issues of Greek poleis with images of animals decorating the obverses and *quadratum incusum* on the reverse. One example are the coins of Miletos with the head of a lion, Klazomenai with that of a winged boar, Ephesos with a bee and Chios with a sphinx (fig. 9). Among the coins that were lost were electron examples from Kyzikos and the island of Lesbos.

In the 6th century BC, Asia Minor succumbed to the Persians, who took over the monetary system invented by the Lydians and issued their own gold darics and silver sigloi (shekels). The collection originally included two darics, one of Xerxes and the other of Darius III, and more than a dozen shekels; only the silver coins have remained. Tarsos in Cilicia also deserves to be mentioned, the city being the issuer of silver staters belonging to the Persian satraps Datames, Mazaïos and Arsames.

The next noteworthy set is constituted by issues of Pergamon, a kingdom established in the 3rd century BC in western Asia Minor. The most important coins struck there were silver *cistophori* with a characteristic image, a bow-case with writhing snake on one side and a *cista mystica* with a snake slithering out of it on the other (fig. 10).

The coinage of Bithynia was represented in the collection by large numbers of bronze coins issued by kings reigning in 279–127 BC, Nikomedes I, Prusias I and II, and Nikomedes II. The single tetradrachm from the rule of Nikomedes II bears his portrait on the obverse and a figure of Zeus on the reverse.

Drachma issues of the kings of Cappadocia from Ariarathes IV to Archelaos were just as numerous, the collection being dominated by coins of Ariobarzanes I. The mint from Caesarea

¹⁸ Aleksandra Krzyżanowska, "Les monnaies de Palmyre : leur chronologie et leur rôle dans la circulation monétaire de la région," in *Les monnayages syriens. Quel apport pour l'histoire du Proche-Orient hellénistique et romain ? Actes de la table ronde de Damas, 10–12 novembre 1999*, Christian Augé, Frédérique Duyrat, eds, vol. 162 (Beirut, 2002), pp. 167–73.

¹⁹ Alfred von Sallet, *Die Antiken Münzen. Neue Bearbeitung von Kurt Regling* (Berlin, 1909). The dedication written in Regling's hand was dated: "Constantinople, 29 X 1918."

in Cappadocia was featured most prominently; it continued to strike silver coins even after the fall of the kingdom, replacing the kings' heads with portraits of Roman emperors.

The animosities between Hellenistic rulers were taken advantage of by Rome, which gradually annexed the different territories.²⁰ Issues of coins from Roman times are very rich in the collection, both from provincial towns (fig. 11) and from colonies founded by the Romans in Asia Minor, Pisidian Antioch²¹ and Alexandria Troas.²² Contrary to the western provinces of the Roman Empire, where local minting disappeared already in the reign of Caligula, the East preserved a pluralism in this field deriving from province traditions and the existing money demand. The number of mints in the East ranged from about a hundred under the first Roman emperors to 363 in the times of Septimius Sever. Only a small share of the leading mints was mentioned above, whereas Semerau-Siemianowski collected examples of coins from mints that operated periodically and struck coins irregularly or only on special occasions.

Not all the issues present in the collection can be discussed here, but one should mention at least the Phoenician Arados and Tyre with their rich issues of tetradrachms and Sidon striking an extremely interesting double shekel of Bodashtart in the 4th century BC.

The Roman set consisted of 7000 coins from the Republic as well as Imperial periods. Republican issues counted 282 pieces²³ and can be said to have been the poorest part of the doctor's collection, although nicely complementing the holdings of the National Museum in this respect. Early issues were missing from it with the exception of didrachm with the image of Mars from 280–276 BC, minted at Metapontum, and a bronze litra from 241–235 BC with the same image. The more valuable coins in the collection included early victoriati with a characteristic depiction of a winged Victory crowning a trophy. Denarii were the most numerous, the earliest pieces dating to 206–200 BC, the latest to the end of the Republic. All the bronze coins were lost.

The set of coins from the Roman Empire is in much better condition. Originally there were 44 gold pieces among the several thousand silver and bronze coins. But the real value of this collection derived from its comprehensiveness, illustrating practically all the Roman emperors and most of the operating mints of the period, even though with a leaning toward those from the eastern part of the Empire, the western ones being represented more modestly in comparison.

The large number of denarii from the first two reigns, originating from the mint in Lugdunum (Lyon), is exceptional. There are 42 examples of the same type from 2 BC to AD 4, bearing images of Lucius and Gaius Caesares.²⁴ The collection originally included also four

²⁰ Maurice Sartre, *Wschód rzymski. Prowincje i społeczeństwa prowincjonalne we wschodniej części basenu Morza Śródziemnego w okresie od Augusta do Sewerów* (31 r. p.n.e. – 235 r. n.e.) (Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków, 1991).

²¹ Aleksandra Krzyżanowska, "Monety Antiochii Pizydyjskiej," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 4 (1959), pp. 239–80; ead., "Les monnaies coloniales d'Antioche de Pisidie sans portrait de l'empereur," *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, Ann 10, no. 3 (1966), pp. 129–43; ead., "La réforme monétaire d'Antioche de Pisidie au temps du règne de Septim Sévère," *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, Ann 9, no. 3–4 (1965), pp. 133–54; ead., "Le cult de Mên à Antioche de Pisidie d'après les monnaies coloniales," in *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michałowski*, Marie-Luise Bernhard, ed. (Warsaw, 1966), pp. 513–21; ead., "Les influences réciproques romaines et indigènes manifestées sur les monnaies des colonies romaines de l'Asie Mineure," *Revue Numismatique*, 6 série, vol. 10 (1969), pp. 286–92, pl. XXXV; ead., *Monnaies coloniales d'Antioche de Pisidie* (Warsaw, 1970). Travaux du Centre d'Archeologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie des Sciences sous la direction de K. Michałowski, vol. 7.

²² Aleksandra Krzyżanowska, "Monety Kolonii Aleksandrii Troas," *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, Ann 5, nos 2–3 (1961), pp. 69–84.

²³ Janina Wiercińska, *Catalogue of Ancient Coins in the National Museum in Warsaw. Coins of the Roman Republic* (Warsaw, 1996).

²⁴ Carol Humphrey Vivian Sutherland, Robert Andrew Glendinning Carson, *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (further: RIC), vol. 1 (London, 1984), nos 207, 210, 212.

aurei from the same mint and with the same image. The reign of Tiberius was represented by 15 denarii and four aurei of the enthroned Livia type.²⁵ All the aurei were lost during the war.

Anna Szemioth is the source of information about Semerau-Siemianowski's visit in 1900 to the exhibition in Paris and his contacts with French numismatists. It must have been the World Exhibition organized in Paris in 1900. In all likelihood, the doctor visited Ernest Babelon (1854–1924), a leading French specialist in ancient numismatics and curator of the Numismatic Cabinet at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. He also presumably made a round of French antiquary shops, making purchases, which would explain the presence of coins from the Gallic mint in his collection.

Silver cistophoric coins, mentioned already with regard to the coinage of the kingdom of Pergamon, originated from the eastern mints in Pergamon and Ephesos. In 61 BC, the Romans took over the minting there. The set in the collection included 14 coins of Marcus Antonius and 15 of Augustus (**fig. 12**). The imagery changed, the obverse featuring a portrait and the reverse losing the *cista mystica*, which had been present still on the coins of Marcus Antonius. The proportions of the set: two types of cistophori of Marcus Antonius²⁶ and six of Augustus,²⁷ are strikingly similar to that of a hoard discovered in Asia Minor, which entered the collections of the Museum in Istanbul about 1918.²⁸ This hoard contained 294 cistophoric coins, 38 of Marcus Antonius and 255 of Augustus.

Coins from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius are richly represented in the collection. Denarii predominate, but there are also many *aes* issues, sestertii and asses. Highlights included perfectly preserved aurei (more than 20 examples) from the first two centuries of the Empire.

Dating to the reigns of Septimius Severus²⁹ and his successors are denarii struck from increasingly debased silver and antoniniani introduced in the wake of Caracalla's monetary reforms. Among the lost coins was a rare aureus of Julia Mamaea, mother of Alexander Severus, with an image of Felicitas on the reverse.

There was also a substantial number of coins of Diocletian in the collection. They represented almost all of the working mints of the period with the exception of Lugdunum and Trier. The predominant issues were those of the eastern mints in Antioch, Heraclea and Kyzikos, producing folles and antoniniani. Two rare argentei came from Nicomedia and Siscia respectively, while the one aureus of this emperor with an image of Jupiter on the reverse, preserved in very good condition, was lost during the war. Of interest is a single bronze coin of Domitius Domitianus,³⁰ Roman usurper who ruled Egypt for a brief period in the times of Diocletian.

One of the few gold coins to last through the war in the collection was a *solidus* of Gallus from the mint in Thessalonika with a personification of Rome and Constantinople (**fig. 13**).

Issues of Constantine the Great and the emperors who succeeded him to the throne are represented by much more modest numbers in comparison, whereas the list of gold coins lost

²⁵ RIC, vol. 1, nos 26, 28, 30.

²⁶ Alberto Banti, Luigi Simonetti, *Corpus Nummorum Romanorum*, vol. 2 (Florence, 1973), p. 96, no. 8; p. 100, no. 17.

²⁷ RIC, vol. 1, nos 476, 480, 481, 482, 487, 505.

²⁸ Carol Humphrey Vivian Sutherland, *The cistophori of Augustus*, Special Publication no. 5 (London, 1970), pp. 1–11.

²⁹ Aleksandra Krzyżanowska, "Ikonomia rodziny Sewerów na monetach rzymskich jako wyraz sztuki rzymskiej na przełomie II i III wieku," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 2 (1957), pp. 175–252.

³⁰ RIC, vol. 6, no. 20.

during the war grows rapidly: three *solidi* of Constantius II, one of Jovian, two of Valentinian I, one of Valens, three of Arcadius, two of Honorius, four of Leo, one each of Anthemius and Zeno. This long list of losses, restricted only to gold coins, shows how much the original collection of Semerau-Siemianowski was reduced and impoverished by what happened to it during the war.

Byzantine coins constitute the last part of this collection. Regling, whose visit to Semerau-Siemianowski was mentioned already above, considered this the best part of the set. At the time when he saw it, it comprised about 3000 coins, including 63 gold coins, most of them in perfect condition and 437 silver coins, the rest being bronze coins. There were also 158 lead seals that Regling considered among the most valuable of the lot.

Numismatists commonly assume that the Byzantine Empire began with the ascension to the throne of Anastasius in 491.³¹ In 498, the emperor reformed the bronze coinage system thoroughly, creating a basis for a stable monetary system. Semerau-Siemianowski's collection included coins of nearly all the emperors reigning in 491–1453, that is, from Anastasius to Constantine XI Palaeologus.

The collection is dominated currently by the bronze coinage. Most of the gold and a large number of the silver coins have been lost. The bronze folles and their fractions originated mainly from the mint in Constantinople, although other mints, like Thessalonika, Nikomedia, Antioch, Kyzikos, Rome and Ravenna were also represented. Originally, there was at least one gold coin per reign and usually more.

Despite considerable losses, the silver coins from Semerau-Siemianowski's collection are still impressive. They include hexagrams introduced into circulation by Heraclius' monetary reform of 615. More than 20 examples come from the time of Heraclius and a few dozen from the reign of Constans (**fig. 14**). Leo III circulated in 720 a new silver denomination, the *miliare*. The coins preserved in the collection represent the emperors Constantine V, Artavasdes and foremost Leo IV. The *miliare* of this last emperor have files filled out in the doctor's hand. He noted their provenance as being "from the bazaars of Constantinople," "from Ahmed Bey, conservator and director of the Museum in Constantinople," "from Nishan Nishanian." The coins of Artavasdes are rare; they were found allegedly in Salonika in 1891 where the doctor purchased them.³² Other sets of silver coins, which are already less numerous, all minted in Constantinople, originated from the times of Nicephorus II Phocas, John I Tzimiskes and Basil II the Macedonian.

A huge set of a few hundred folles from the 10th–11th century, the issue of which was initiated by John I Tzimiskes who removed his name and image and introduced instead a bust of Christ. Of interest are also coins of Alexius I Comnenus and his successors, cup-shaped coins struck from different metals, aspron trachy made of electrum (**fig. 15**) and aspron trachy billon change with images of the emperor, Christ, Mother of God and saints. Also represented in the collection are coins of emperors from the Palaeologus dynasty, the last rulers of the resurrected Byzantine Empire ruling from 1261 to 1453, the year that the Turks took Constantinople. These are silver stavratons with a bust of Christ on one side and an emperor on the other side, as well as two types of half stavratons, one an analogous motif and the other with Saint Demetrius on horseback and a bust of the emperor.

³¹ Maciej Salamon, *Mennictwo Bizantyńskie* (Krakow, 1987). Zarys mennictwa europejskiego pod red. Lesława Morawieckiego, vol. 6.

³² Anna Szemiothowa, "Les rares monnaies antiques du Musée National de Varsovie," *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, Ann 5 – additional fascicle, *Polish Numismatic News* (1961), pp. 85–90.

The conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204 led to the breakup of the Byzantine Empire into a few smaller political organisms. One of these was the Empire of Trebizond, which was established around the city of Trebizond in the eastern part of Asia Minor. The state lasted through 1461, ruled by a dynasty called the "Great Komnenos." Made up of a few dozen coins, this set is among the rarest in Polish collections. The coinage derived from the Byzantine system, but transformed, approaching the coinage of neighboring lands, chiefly the Seljuk Turks. It was based on a silver coin called an *asper*. The coin typology includes themes known from Byzantine coins. The most typical motif is a likeness of the ruler on one side and Saint Eugenios, patron of Trebizond, on the other (**fig. 16**).

The set of Byzantine seals consists of 133 lead examples and 25 metal copies,³³ all of which survived the war undisturbed. Semerau-Siemianowski began collecting them once he moved to Constantinople. Most of them were found by him on the seashore or bought from antiquaries.³⁴ The last purchases were made in 1919–20. Lead seals were known from the beginning of the Late Roman period, that is, the turn of the 3rd and 4th century. They started being used on a bigger scale in the 6th century and flourished in the Byzantine period. They were also made in gold, more seldom in silver. The seals in the doctor's collection are all of lead. Beside seals of rulers, there were also seals of officials of the imperial court and the state, civil, fiscal and military administration, functionaries of the provincial administration, church administration and family seals (**fig. 17**), as well as metal copies from the original seals. According to Vitalien Laurent, they are the work of Greek forgers operating in 1918–39 in Athens and probably also in Constantinople.³⁵ The collection includes 18 copies from this workshop.

Doctor Władysław Semerau-Siemianowski formed a monumental collection, which included examples of coinage from the entire ancient world, starting from the oldest issues of Greek cities and Hellenistic kingdoms, through the coinage of Roman emperors, to the coins of Byzantine rulers. It remains an impressive collection despite severe wartime losses. Rare examples, struck of precious metals and in perfect condition, are a highlight of any collection. The collection is interesting in its comprehensiveness. A thorough analysis of its contents, supplemented with facts from the doctor's life, paints a picture of the man in an entirely new light: not a casual gatherer of finds, but a conscious collector systematically and methodically forming his collection. A man of broad horizons and extensive knowledge for his times, maintaining close contacts with many numismatists around the world. Last but not least, a patriot who offered the collection he had created over a lifetime to a free homeland. The Ancient Numismatics Department would not have been established without this gift and the National Museum in Warsaw would not be now in possession of the largest and richest ancient coin collections in Poland.

Translated by Iwona Zych

³³ Anna Szemioth, Tadeusz Wasilewski, "Sceaux byzantins du Musée National de Varsovie. Première partie," *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, vol. 11 (1966), pp. 1–38; Szemioth, Wasilewski, "Sceaux byzantins du Musée National de Varsovie. Deuxième partie," *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, vol. 14 (1969), pp. 63–89.

³⁴ Anna Szemiothowa, "Zbiór pieczęci bizantyjskich Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie," *Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Ann 3 (1958), pp. 181–240, esp. p. 182.

³⁵ Szemioth, Wasilewski, "Sceaux byzantins... Première partie," op. cit., p. 3, n. 8.