

Persian banks of Babylonia and currencies

The old ones showed preference by two metals: gold and silver. This predilection justified many factors, that send us to conditions that determined the use of the metal like guideline of value for the commercial interchange. It was necessary that the material was rare, but not too much; that enough malleable turned out in order to be able to be elaborated, but sufficiently it last to conserve certain characteristics without altering itself when happening of hand in hand; that one did not oxidize nor underwent other disadvantages that diminished their weight and his value; and, mainly, that was recognized with facility by the weight, color and sound. These characteristics are concretely in silver and in the gold, that in a moment was chosen like best metals to coin currency. A distinction student and simplista a little attributes to the gold to the currencies of the great dynasties of monarchs and the silver, to the republics independent: kings of Lydia, the Aqueménidas de Persia, the empire of Alexander Magno and the diádocos - their successors produced gold currencies in great amount; poleis Greek and the Roman Republic, however, preferred to put in circulation silver pieces. This distinction, although very generic, does not let really lock up a bottom. During many centuries, East preferred gold. The first currencies of this metal we found them in Lydia, the region of inheriting Smaller Asia of a great central empire that had taken gold, even before using the currency, like datum point for all the interchanges and values. In the Mesopotamia of IV the millenium BC, bloomed one of the greater and older civilizations, the one of the sumerios. Mesopotamiacountry between rivers, Tigris and the Euphrates, today distributed between Iran and Irak) was in an exceptionally lucky position, as much by the fertility of the land like by its condition of crossroads of caravans of merchants, that allowed him to control the traffic from the Aegean Sea to the Persian gulf. In this civilization it was born and the writing spread (towards 3200 year BC), indeed by the necessity of, to mark, and to differentiate the numerous merchandize from the diverse craftsmen and farmers who took their products to the great cities stop to interchange them. The population was organized in cities temple, in whose interior the sacerdotal class represented, in addition to the religious authority, to be able economic and political. In a so complex and organized civilization it penetrated the semítico element after the invasion of towns that sumerios did not know to contain (its great weakness had to the absence of political and military unit). Between the diverse kingdoms formed in this period, the one of Babylonia acquired preeminent importance, and gave name to all the mesopotámica civilization during several centuries (approximately of years 2000 to 562 BC), although in this region several towns followed one another and alternated, among them hititas and asirios.

the banks - babylonian temples

We have talked about to the babylonian cities like cities temple, to emphasize the importance that this place of cult had in the sine of the civilization that we commented. Around III the millenium BC arose and they spread zigurats, towers that rose in terraces decreasing, with a temple in the peak and outer stairs of access (the tower of Biblical Babel is most famous). Although with the passage of time the monarchy was holding fast more and more, the sacerdotal class continued occupying a position of the great prestige and enjoying enormous privileges: besides to control the instruction and the culture, also she was depositaria of the economic power. In temples were accumulated, in effect, fabulous wealth originating partly of the offerings of the faithfuls and partly of the yield

of territories and of the manufactures that belonged to the divinity. The gold along with stored in the sacred places the stone samples that they served as units of weight, generally zoomorphic, that is in animal form: in Babylonia they had duck figure; in Egypt, probably in memory of the use of the cattle in the first interchanges, their aspect was of ox head. The temples thus became official places of verification of weights and measures, besides to be destined to

the Persian currencies of

The bimetallic system, based on a fixed relation between gold and silver, was adopted by the Persians when, in the century I BC, conquered it, all the Greek Anatolia, cities of the coast and Babylonia (539 year BC). With Darío I (years 522-486 BC), the empire reached an enormous extension: it included/understood the Egypt Stop, the Asian plains until India, the Caucasus and the deserts of Arabia, covering about 7.000.000 km². Its work of organization was important, because it tried to conciliate a strong central control with the local traditions. The monetary circulation inside the empire took place in dárícos (of the name of Darío) of gold and in sícios of silver. And others, for the first time in the history of the numismatist, they represented in the obverse a armed human figure with arc and sends: the picture of the Great King, with the uniform of the archers of its guard. In these currencies they coexist of way significant and modern the concept to be able regal, that it legitimizes the piece, and the distinguishing characteristic of Darío and the kings who followed one another in the dynasty of the Aqueménidas: its paper of the great military and conquerors. The dárícos of gold weighed 8.5 grams, and the sício of silver maintained with gold a relation of 1:1 3 and 1/3; therefore, a dáríco corresponded to 11 2/3 grams of silver. This criterion was based on the postulate of which between gold and silver there was a always fixed relation. Even in archaic commercial system like the Persian, was not possible to maintain this proportion without falsar the rules of the market immutable. Then (like today) this relation varied of independent way for reasons of speculation, tesaurización or production.

A long and fatigoso trip

As an example of how the transactions were carried out in the mesopotámico world, we describe the interchanges briefly with Kanis, one of the most important colonies you would take root in Anatolia between 1900 and 1800 BC. This commercial center distaba more than 800 km of metropolis and was in a very inaccessible region, to which caravans of asses only could accede. In the favorable station (in winter the contacts were interrupted), left from the capital great amounts of extracted lead and tin of the mines you would take root, fabrics and damascos. To the arrival of the merchandize, after the length and difficult route, they had multiplied his price: the metals cost the double that to the game, and weaves, the triple. Naturally, the trip was very expensive, but it was worth the trouble to undertake it because the benefits very were elevated. In addition, the retailers they were able to reduce expenses saving in the wage of the conductors of asses. Also the sale of these last ones in the destiny place it constituted a source of remarkable gains. For the transport of obtained gold and the silver of the sales, post office were used, also very used for the correspondence.