

trict were carefully adjusted in proportion to the talent there in use for weighing the precious metals, these talents being different in the various localities, but nearly all traceable to the Babylonian origin.

The form of the ingot of most of the early coins was bean shaped or oval, except in Southern Italy, where the earliest coins of Achaean cities were flat and circular. The device usually consisted of the figure of an animal or the forepart of an animal; the heads and figures of gods and men being rare in this early period. The reverse side of the coin did not at first bear a device, but only the impress, in the form of an incuse square, of the upper of the two dies between which the ingot was placed. The early coins of some of the cities above mentioned are characterised by having devices on both sides (generally the same) on the obverse in relief and on the reverse incuse.

The coins of the two centuries previous to the Persian Wars exhibit considerable varieties of style and execution. In common with the other remains of archaic art which has come down to us, and with which it is instructive to compare them, they may be divided into two classes. The earlier is characterised by extreme rudeness in the forms and expressions in the actions represented, the later, by a gradual development into more clearly defined forms with angularity and stiffness. The eye of the human face is always drawn, even when in profile, as if seen from the front, the hair is generally represented by lines of minute dots, the mouth wears a fixed and formal smile; but withal, there is in the best archaic work, a strength and touch which is often wanting in the fully developed art of a later period.

There are altogether 108 coins exhibited in the first period.

There is exhibited the earliest coin that is known to have been circulated. The obverse is a striated surface, while on the reverse is an oblong sinking between two square sinkings. It weighs 100 4-5 grains.

The next coin which attracts attention is one with an inscription in archaic letters meaning, "I am the sign of Phanes;" this is the earliest inscription known. Phanes was a Halicarnassian. He was an important man in the court of Amasis, king of Egypt, whose service however, he deserted for that of Cambyses, king of Persia, whom he assisted in his invasion of Egypt during the year B.C. 525. As this coin was found at

Halicarnassus, it is very probable that it was struck there, though it is also very probable that it was struck by an ancestor of Phanes. On the obverse is the inscription and a stag feeding, while on the reverse is an oblong sinking between two square sinkings. Its weight is 216½ grains.

The next of interest, a Persian gold coin of the earliest style, was struck in the reign of Darius I. On the obverse is the Great King holding a bow and spear, while the reverse is incuse. This coin weighs 129 grains.

Then comes a silver coin, which is perhaps the earliest coin of that rich Ionian city, Clasmenna. The obverse is a lion devouring his prey, while the reverse bears the fore-part of a winged boar in an incuse square. Its weight is 226 grains.

—From Herdman's Miscellany.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

IMPROVED POSTAL CARD.

A postal card with a flap to cover the writing would be a good thing and would meet a popular demand. The postal card is one of the articles that become indispensable the moment they are once used, but many people are prevented from using them by the fact that privacy is impossible. The device which Senator Culom has brought to the attention of the Senate Post Office Committee provides for this in a simple but effective way. The card is double and the back is split diagonally from the centre, where the four points can be attached in the same way that an envelope is sealed. Of course the writing could not be inspected without loosening the flaps, and ample protection to the correspondents would be secured. There would be a small addition to the weight of the card, but we are rich enough to carry a few pounds more in the mail bags without serious embarrassments to the country's finances.—The American Stationer.

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