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MEDIEVAL and MODERN HOARDS

A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9)

13. Unknown (probably historical Greater Iran), in European trade before 2012

by

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LONDON THE ROYAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY 2013

MIDDLE EAST?

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[PLATES 72-79]

Dep. 638/9 or later

Disp. In European and American trade

Introduction¹

In March 2012 a parcel of 66 Sasanian silver drachms was brought to the author's attention. All the coins were of Ardashīr III (628–30) with the exception of one coin of Yazdgard III (632–51). They formed a coherent parcel. The latest coin was dated year seven of Yazdgard III (638/9). It is worth recording this parcel because it dates from the years of the collapse of the Sasanian empire, after the battle of Qādisiyya (636), and also because about half the coins show ink *dipinti* (black ink marks), some of which are legible. The reading of the dipinti will be discussed elsewhere.² Shortly before the deadline for submitting the final text of this report the author was made aware of another parcel from the Ardashīr hoard of about 173 coins. It is hoped to record this new parcel in the next volume of NC.

The origin and context of this commercial parcel are lost. It cannot be ascertained whether the two groups form the complete hoard, which never contained coins of the rarer rulers, or whether the parcels are a selection from a much larger hoard. The latter is more likely as no known hoards from the end of the Sasanian empire, recovered from controlled excavations or contexts, are composed entirely of the coins of one of the late rulers. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that other hoards dating from this period contain mostly coins of Khusrō II (590–628). Also, in the present parcel, the next coin chronologically after year 2 of Ardashīr III (629/30) is a year 7 drachm of Yazdgard III (638/9), representing a gap of nine years and five rulers. The mints found on Ardashīr's coins show the wide circulation of his coins from eastern Khurāsān to Iraq. The parcel could have come from a hoard similar to that of Susa 1 (1932) (Fārs), which was found in a controlled excavation. Susa 1 contained 2,278 coins with a *terminus post quem* of year 3 of Yazdgard III (634/5). Most of the coins

¹ I am grateful to Susan Tyler-Smith for discussing the parcel with me and for references to the literature; also to François Gurnet, Hodge Mehdi Malek, Jean-Pierre Righetti, Christian Schaack and Robert Schaaf for their generosity in giving me details of coins. Robert Schaaf also gave me his advice and carefully edited the English version of this report. Katrin Gutberlet kindly took all the photographs.

² A forthcoming article will include a philological discussion of the dipinti, by Dieter Weber, found in this Ardashīr III parcel and the 'oddly die-linked hoard'.

66 Æ

were from the reign of Khusrō II (95%), but it also contains coins of Ardashīr III (29), Bōrān (7), Hormizd V (36), Khusrō V (3).³

Between 2009 and 2012, a number of parcels from a large hoard of at least 2,500 coins were recorded which included some very oddly die-linked coins in the name of Khusrō II. Numerous coins from that 'hoard' also bear ink dipinti and it too, closes at the time of Yazdgard III.⁴ Coins of Ardashīr III were curiously absent from the latter 'hoard' as Khusrō II's coins were absent from the present Ardashīr III parcel. Despite this surprising asymmetry both groups are distinct, rather than the present parcel being a selection from the larger one. There are two reasons: first, the differences in the greyish hue of the present coins from the 'oddly die-linked' coins and, second, the Yazdgard III coin in the Ardashīr parcel represents a different type from the four Yazdgard III coins (all BN, years 12 to 14) which can be associated with the 'oddly die-linked hoard'. The mint distribution, however, bears a superficial resemblance, with a prevalence of coins with mint abbreviations from Fars and no coins from Sakastān (SK) in either parcel. The mint SK is exceedingly rare for Ardashīr III,⁵ although common for Boran and Yazdgard III. The Ardashir III parcel and the larger 'oddly die-linked hoard' represent the first substantial groups of coins with dipinti, since the publication of the second Susa (1976) hoard,⁶ and are among the few published hoards or hoard material from the period of the collapse of the empire. The phenomenon of dipinti in the seventh century was probably more widespread than present collections and commercial parcels suggest. Some of the present coins had been cleaned before the parcel was recorded, but it is said by the owner that coins with traces of dipinti were not cleaned. Over the past twenty years the author has observed many coins in trade with, mostly, illegible traces of dipinti.

Ardashīr III is represented by 22 mints, with the majority⁷ of the coins coming from the provinces of Fārs (33), Khuzistān (9), and the Iraq region (2). Die analysis reveals almost no die linkage, and then only within expected limits. There are three pairs of coins from the same obverse and reverse die, one of each of AY, AYLAN, BYŠ, all from year 2, and one pair sharing a just reverse die, DA, also of year 2.

The mint WLC - A survey

The mint abbreviation WLC is scarce, with only Ardashīr III's second year being at all common. It is represented by a single coin in this parcel. The location of WLC has been discussed in the literature. To gain an impression of the frequency of this mint, a brief survey of published and unpublished material, in both public and private collections, was undertaken. Except for the Ardashīr year 2 coins, no die-study was

³ Unvala, 'Monnaies sassanides', Unavala mentions two coins of Khusrō III. This error is corrected by Allotte de la Fuÿe, 'Notes', p. 86.

⁴ See n. 2. There will also be a scientific report by Josef Riederer.

⁵ No coins of SK have yet been published. There are examples in private collections: Gurnet (4 coins); Schaaf (1 coin).

⁶ Gyselen, 'Trésor trouvé à Suse'; Gignoux, 'Les inscriptions en surcharge'.

⁷ This is an estimate as not all mint abbreviations can, of course, be identified with certainly.

attempted. To date, few years are known. A coin of Pērōz is mentioned by Paruck,⁸ but could not be confirmed.⁹ Khurshudian and Zohrabian provide a list with dates for this mint. Since they do not mention any of their sources,¹⁰ we have to be cautious in accepting their data. Dates only reported by them are therefore in italics.¹¹

Khusrō I years 6,¹² 7,¹³ 8,¹⁴ 9,¹⁵ 17,¹⁶ 18,¹⁷ 19,¹⁸ 20,¹⁹ 31,²⁰ 34,²¹ 38,²² 41,²³ 44,²⁴ 45,²⁵ 46,²⁶ 47²⁷ and 48²⁸; Hormizd IV years 1,²⁹ 2,³⁰ 3,³¹ 5,³² 7,³³ 10,³⁴ 12³⁵, Khusrō II, years

⁸ Paruck repeats the mint / year combinations, which he gave in *Sāsānian Coins*, in his summary, 'Mint-marks'. Only the additional coins found in 'Mint-marks' are cited here, all others are cited according to *Sāsānian Coins*.

⁹ Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 168, no. 143. Such a mint is not recorded in the SNS.

¹⁰ It is surprising, that neither Paruck (*Sāsānian Coins* and 'Mint-marks') nor Khurshudian and Zohrabian, *Sassanian Coins* mention any coin struck by Khusrō II at this mint.

¹¹ The list below includes only those dates from Khurshudian and Zohrabian, *Sassanian Coins* where we have no further references in other sources. Some dates may go back to the works of Paruck. New dates given by Khurshudian and Zohrabian are indicated by italics. However, Khurshudian and Zohrabian, do not include the only coin described in their catalogue (Hormizd IV, year 2), in their summary.

¹² Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 187, no. 232.

¹³ 2 coins. Priv. coll.: Johnson (2 coins).

¹⁴ 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Johnson.

¹⁵ 2 coins. Tsotselia, *History and Coin Finds*, p. 60, no. 18 (hoard Alevi, Georgia). Priv. coll.: Righetti (1 coin).

¹⁶ 2 coins. Priv. colls: Schaaf (1 coin); Germany (photo SB 9825).

¹⁷ 13 coins. Paruck, *Sāsānian Coins*, p. 187, no. 232; Peus (Frankfurt), Auction 363 (26 April 2000), lot 5317. Priv. colls: Germany, (2 coins; photos SB 2699; SB 2700); England (1 coin); Gurnet (2 coins); Johnson (4 coins); Righetti (1 coin); Schaack (1 coin).

¹⁸ 5 coins. Paruck, *Sāsānian Coins*, p. 187, no. 232. Priv. colls: Gurnet (2 coins); Johnson (1 coin); Righetti (1 coin).

¹⁹ 1 coin. Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 187, no. 232.

²⁰ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²¹ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²² Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²³ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²⁴ 4 coins. Bivar, 'Hilla', no. 38; Paruck, *Sāsānian Coins*, p. 168, no. 143; priv. colls: England (1 coin); Gurnet (1 coin).

²⁵ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²⁶ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²⁷ 3 coins. Zeno.ru no. 34273; priv. colls: England (1 coin); Gurnet (1 coin).

²⁸ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, p. 31.

²⁹ 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Gurnet.

³⁰ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, *Sassanian Coins*, p. 76 and pl. 35, no. 11, (ex Koghb hoard, Tavuš region).

³¹ 2 coins. Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 168, no. 143; priv. coll.: photo SB 3042 (1 coin).

³² 1 coin. Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 168, no. 143.

³³ 1 coin. Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 168, no. 143.

³⁴ 2 coins. Paruck, Sāsānian Coins, p. 168, no. 142. Priv. coll.: Righetti (1 coin).

³⁵ 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Gurnet.

2,³⁶ 3,³⁷ 5,³⁸ 8,³⁹ 9,⁴⁰ 10,⁴¹ 12,⁴² 25⁴³; Ardashīr III year 1,⁴⁴ year 2, the example in this group, and 17 others;⁴⁵ Bōrān year 1.⁴⁶

David Bivar, suggested that WLC might represent *wlwc*'n for Georgia in the Caucasus, based on a third century inscription from Naqsh-i Rustam.⁴⁷ Rika Gyselen found evidence of the Caucasian *wlwc*'n on late seals, but the name does not occur with the abbreviation *wlc* to indicate that both refer to the same place.⁴⁸ While we have no toponym for the provincial capital of Georgia in Sasanian times, in the Umayyad period a capital and mint town seem to be established at Tbilisi (Tiflīs). Seemingly without knowing Bivar's article (at least, giving no credit to him or to Martin Spregling) Khurshudian and Zohrabian suggested the same identification of WLC with *wlwc*'n.⁴⁹ Only two coins of WLC can be traced to this area, one to a Georgian and one to an Armenian hoard, much less than would be expected for a mint in the Caucasus region.⁵⁰ Stuart Sears, in addition, finds it difficult to believe that Ardashīr III and Bōrān were in control of any Caucasian mint after the Byzantine campaign through Armenia to Ctesiphon in 627–8.⁵¹

The sequence of mint activity, as far as we can reconstruct it today, gives the impression that WLC started to operate in Khusrō I's year 6 at the latest, remaining active until year 9, with another period of activity between years 17 and 20. Whether the reading of the dates from the fourth decade of Khusrō I's reign is correct remains doubtful, because Khurshudian and Zohrabian do not provide any references, and no coins of these years are otherwise known. Sporadic mint activity is detectable in the fifth decade of Khusrō I's reign, it continued through the reigns of Hormizd IV,

³⁶ 3 coins. Zeno.ru no. 86234; priv. coll.: England (1 coin); OMJ photo SB 1563 (1 coin).

³⁷ 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Johnson.

³⁸ 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Gurnet.

³⁹ 7 coins. http://zeno.ru/ no. 34454; priv. colls: England (1 coin); Gurnet (2 coins); Johnson (1 coin); Righetti (1 coin); Schaack (1 coin).

⁴⁰ 2 coins. Priv. colls: Johnson (1 coin); Righetti (1 coin).

⁴¹ 3 coins. Priv. colls: Gurnet (1 coin); Schaack (1 coin); OMJ photo SB 9723 (1 coin).

⁴² 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Gurnet.

⁴³ 1 coin. Priv. coll.: Johnson.

⁴⁴ 1 coin. Paruck, 'Mint-marks', p. 103, no. 141.

⁴⁵ 17 coins plus one from the Ardashīr hoard (A-a); Curtis et al., *Tehran*, no. 4316 (H-h); Novak and Militky, *Corpus Sasanicus*, nos NP 605 (B-b; Náprstek Museum), DR 98 (C-c; private coll.); Paruck, *Sāsānian Coins*, p. 168, no. 143; Zeno.ru no. 59426 (E-e); 74420 (F-f). Priv. colls: England (not compared); Gurnet (8 coins, 18 I-I; 23 J-j; 60 K-k; 61 L-l; 62 K-m; 63 M-o; 64 K-n; 65 D-d); Johnson (1 coin, not compared); Mallon (G-g; with countermark; http://www.grifterrec.com/coins/ sasania/ardashirIII/i_sas_ardIII_WLC-2.jpg, 28 Jan. 2013); Schaaf (D-d). 13 obverse and 15 reverse dies were identified on the 16 coins studied.

⁴⁶ 5 coins. Paruck, 'Mint-marks', p. 103, no. 141. Malek and Curtis, 'Queen Borān', nos 140-3.

⁴⁷ Bivar, 'Hilla', pp. 165–6 on the basis of data from Sprengling, *Third Century Iran*, pp. 12 (line 30), 19, 22, 47 (line 12), 52, 58 (line 12).

⁴⁸ Gyselen, *Géographie administrative*, pp. 66, 80. Gyselen, *Sasanian Seals*, pp. 134 (seal I/9a = I10a), 240 (seal I/165a = I/166a).

⁴⁹ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, Sassanian Coins, pp. 31f.

⁵⁰ Khurshudian and Zohrabian, *Sassanian Coins*, p. 76, no. 11; Tsotselia, *History and Coin Finds*, p. 60, no. 18.

⁵¹ Sears, Monetary History, p. 180.

up to the twelfth regnal year of Khusrō II, the year of the coinage reform within the empire. This coin is of the 'transitional' type. It can be supposed that the mint was then temporarily closed. The year 25 Khusrō II drachm in the Johnson collection seems to be an isolated date. The mint was then re-established under Ardashīr III, showing considerable production activity with multiple die pairs per year, until it was it was again closed a year later under Bōrān.

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CATALOGUE

Traces of a dipinto' refers to almost vanished, illegible, ink traces while a *'dipinto*' shows an almost complete grapheme, legible or not. Sometimes a hammered edge is prominent, and this is indicated as such; sometimes this feature is hardly detectable but silence on this point does not exclude hammered edges.

The mint abbreviations were identified according to the latest discussion in the forthcoming book by Susan Tyler-Smith, *The Coinage Reforms of Khusrū II*.

Abbreviations:

- G. = Göbl, *Sasanian Numismatics* and is followed by the obverse / reverse type numbers found on his table 13.
- G. I = wingless crown.
- G. II = winged crown.
- STS = Tyler-Smith, 'Yazdgerd III' and is followed by the obverse / reverse type numbers, pp. 155–7.

The dies of each mint / date combination start at A-a. All coins are illustrated except no. 28.

Over Page.

⁵² Gurnet, 'Re-use of dies', fig. 10, published a coin of ART year 2 with a re-cut die, also from ST (?) year 1. Gurnet's coin, however, shows the first crown and a different reverse die. This suggests that a larger number of ST reverses might have been transferred to Ardashīr Khurra, were available in year 2 and were subsequently re-engraved. Further observation is needed.

Cat./	Mint abbreviation and	Regnal	Regnal Type no.	Die	Wt	Die axis	Die axis Comments
photo no.	photo no. identification	year		sou	(g)	<i>(h)</i>	
			AR	ARDASHĪR II	IR III		
1.	AHM (Hamadhān, Jibāl)	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.12	6	
2.	AHM	2	G. II/1	B-b	4.14	3	
Э.	AHM	2	G. II/1	C-c	4.13	n	
4.	AM (Āmul, Ţabaristān)	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.15	n	
5.	APL (Ābarshahr, Khurāsān)	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.00	.0	Cf. Mochiri, <i>Étude</i> , figs 72, 73. Mint recut (?) two teeth or ² before <i>L</i> .
6.	ART (Ardashīr Khurra, Fārs)	1	G. I/1	A-a	4.15	c,	
7.	ART	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.13	3	Mint and year re-engraved, from ST (?), year 1.52
8.	AT (Āturbadagān, Azarbaiiān?)	1	G. I/1	A-a	4.11	3	Cf. Mochiri, <i>Étude</i> , fig. 1358; rev. traces of a diminto
9.	AT	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.11	6	Probably unpublished.
10.	AY (Ērān-Xvarrah-Shābuhr, Khuzistān?)	2	G. II/1	A-a	3.74	.0	Cf. Mochiri, Étude, figs 436, 1110.
11.	AY	2	G. II/1	B-b	4.06	3	Hatching from flan preparation visible on reverse, hammered edge.
12.	AY	2	G. II/1	C-c	4.13	6	
13.	AY	2	G. II/1	D-d	3.69	4	
14.	AY	2	G. II/1	E-e	4.09	3	Hammered edge; later stage of die.
15.	AY	2	G. II/1	E-e	4.13	3	Traces of a dipinto.
16.	AY	2	G. II/1	F-f	4.01	3	Dipinto.
17.	AY	2	G. II/1	G-g	3.23	3	Dipinto.
18.	AY	2	G. II/1	H-h	3.94	6	Traces of a dipinto.
19.	AYL (unknown)	2	G. II/1	A-a	3.63	6	Traces of a dipinto, unstruck parts, obv. and rev.
							hatching from flan preparation; hammered edge.
20.	AYL	2	G. II/1	B-b	3.67	3	Dipinto.
21.	AYL	2	G. II/1	C-c	4.03	ю	Dipinto.

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Cat./	Mint abbreviation and	Reonal	Reonal Tyne no.	Die	W_{t}	Die axis	Die axis Comments
photo no.	photo no. identification	year	7 /	sou	(g)	(η)	
22.	AYLAN (Ērān-āsān-kar-	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.00	3	Cf. Mochiri, Étude, fig. 927.
	Kavād, later Hulwān, Jibāl?)						
23.	AYLAN	2	G. II/1	B-b	4.22	3.30	Hammered edge.
24.	AYLAN	2	G. II/1	C-c	4.15	3	Hammered edge.
25.	AYLAN	2	G. II/1	C-c	4.14	3	Dipinto.
26.	AYLAN	2	G. II/1	D-c	4.17	3	Dipinto; curls under diadem.
27.	BN (unidentified mint in	2	G. I/1	A-a	4.11	3	
00						,	
28.	BYS (Bīshāpūr, Fārs)	2	G. 11/1	A-a	4.09	3	
29.	BYŠ	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.12	3	
30.	DA (Dārābgerd, Fārs)	1	G. I/1	A-a	4.13	3	
31.	DA	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.10	3	
32.	DA	2	G. II/1	B-b	3.91	3	
33.	DA	2	G. II/1	C-b	4.16	3	
34.	DA	2	G. II/1	D-c	4.13	9	Dipinto.
35.	DA	2	G. II/1	E-d	4.14	3	Dipinto.
36.	GW (Qumm, Jibāl)	2	G. II/1	A-a	3.60	3	Cf. Mochiri, Étude, fig. 1467.
37.	KL (Sīrajān?, Kirmān)	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.09	3	
38.	KL	2	G. II/1	B-b	4.13	3	Traces of a dipinto.
39.	ML (Marv, Khurāsān)	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.12	3	Dipinto.
40.	MY (Mēshān?, southern	2	G. II/1	A-a	3.84	6	
	Iraq)						
41.	NAL (Narmāshīr?, Kirmān)	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.07	3	
42.	NAL	2	G. II/1	B-b	4.04	3	
43.	PL (Furāt-i Mēshān?	2	G. II/1	A-a	4.07	3:30	Cf. Mochiri, <i>Étude</i> , fig. 1546.
	Southern Iraq)						
44.	ST (Iştakhr, Fars)	2	G. I/1	A-a	3.94	3	
45.	ST	2	G. II/1	B-b	4.06	3	Cf. Mochiri, Étude, fig. 1359.

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HEIDEMANN, A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9) (1)



HEIDEMANN, A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9) (2)



PLATE 75

HEIDEMANN, A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9) (4)



HEIDEMANN, A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9) (5)



PLATE 77

HEIDEMANN, A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9) (6)

PLATE 78



HEIDEMANN, A HOARD FROM THE TIME OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE (AD 638–9) (7)

PLATE 79

