Arab-Sasanian Numismatics and History during the Early Islamic Period in Iran and Iraq: The Johnson Collection of Arab-Sasanian Coins by Hodge Mehdi Malek, Royal Numismatic Society Special Publication no. 55 in two volumes, 832 pages including 130 plates; ISSN 0080 4487; ISBN 0 901405 94 9

This is the first major work to attempt a comprehensive survey of the Arab-Sasanian silver coinage since Walker’s 1941 Catalogue of the British Museum collection. It includes the latest research on the subject, both historical (chapters 1 to 4) and numismatic (chapter 5 to 15). All the coins (over 1,600), both silver drachms and copper fulus, in the Johnson collection are illustrated on the excellent plates. Where the Johnson collection does not have a specimen of an important coin an example is illustrated from another source, making this a truly important work.

The extensive chapters on the persons named on the coins, the mints, and the Pahlavi, Arabic and Sogdian legends, make this an invaluable historical source. Other chapters discuss the copper issues with their varied designs, the eras and dates used, metrology, coins struck in the east in Sīstān and further north by the Hephthalites, and countermarks, as well as the designs found on the silver drachms. All Pahlavi and Arabic legends (mints, persons named, religious and other marginal legends, dates) are written out as they appear on the coins in extensive tables. This makes it possible for a beginner in the series to read these sometimes difficult legends.

About the author:

The author has been active as a collector and student of Arab-Sasanian coins since 1970. He published a book about the coinage of Tabaristān (RNS SP 39) in 2004 and has written numerous articles about Arab-Sasanian coins and the related late-Sasanian series. In this work he has brought together his expertise on the coinage, his knowledge of the Persian language and his experience from visiting many of the mint and other places discussed in the book.

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Arab-Sasanian Numismatics and History during the Early Islamic Period in Iran and Iraq

Volume 1
Part I: Historical Survey
Part II: Coinage

HODGE MEHDI MALEK

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CHAPTER 9
PERSONS NAMED ON COINAGE

Many different persons are named on Arab-Sasanian silver and copper issues. Most can be identified with known rulers and officials. The earlier issues coins were struck in the names of the late Sasanian kings Khusrau II (590–628) and Yazdgard III (632–51). This was no doubt to promote the recognition and acceptance of such coins by the local populace who would have been predominantly Zoroastrians and not necessarily content to be ruled by Arab governors.

The persons named on the coinage are often opponents of the Umayyads. Thus ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr was a rival caliph from 61 to 73H and his name and those he appointed, such as his brother Mus’ab b. al-Zubayr and ‘Abd Allāh b. Khāzim are featured on much of the coinage of that period. Khārijites, such as ‘Atiyya b. al-Aswad and Qatārī b. al-Fujā’a, who were opponents of both the Umayyads and Zubayrids, also struck coins. Others, such as ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muhammad and his supporters including ‘Amr b. Laqīt, were simply people who had revolted against Umayyad rule and temporarily held control of certain areas.

For the most part, the coinage is either anonymous, being in the names of former Sasanian kings Khusrau, Yazdgard, and rarely Hormizd, or in the name of the governors of the East (such as Ziyād b. Abī Sufyān, ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād and al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf), major subdivisions of the East or single provinces. Occasionally coins were struck in the name of the Umayyad caliph himself, as with Mu‘āwiya and ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān. The naming of governors and other powerful local figures on coins, rather than the overall ruler, was a distinct break from Sasanian tradition where the bust and name on coins was that of the monarch.¹

We do not always know whether the person named on some coins had been appointed by the Umayyads or was an opponent of Umayyad rule, such as with al-Hakam b. Abī al-Ās and ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Zayd in Kirmān from 52 to 58H. There is probably no satisfactory way of ordering the coinage given the disparity of the persons named on coins, their positions, allegiances and dating eras involved.²

This chapter deals with the persons named on the coins both from a historical perspective and from the mint signatures and dates known.

Names: these follow the order in Part IV, Table 3 which provides a transliteration and inscription of each name found on the coins.

Dates: where a year is followed by U this denotes the issue is unconfirmed, i.e. neither a specimen nor an illustration has been personally observed by the author.
Where a year is followed by a question mark this denotes that the date or mint signature is ambiguous.

9.1 ‘Abd Allāh

9.2 ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir [b. Kurayz]

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir, born in 4H, was from the Prophet’s tribe of Quraysh and became a leading supporter of the Umayyads. In 29H he was appointed by his cousin Caliph ‘Uthmān (23–35H) as his first governor of Basra. From there ‘Abd Allāh sent forces after the Sasanian king Yazdgard III.³ In 31H he and his forces

In addition to the coins, there is a bronze weight in his name with an Arabic inscription: ‘In the name of God; Bishr b. Marwān, the amīr; this is a weight of twelve’.

9.25 Al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf

Al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf was a ruthless military commander and administrator for the Umayyads in Iraq and the Iranian lands to the east from about 73H.157 He was born in Tāʾīf in 41H158 and became a member of the shurta (police) in Damascus. He described the ideal commander of the shurta as one who was constantly frowning, able to sit for a long time, reliable, untreacherous, unwavering in truth, and able to resist the attempts of the ashrāf (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad by his daughter Fātima and hence influential persons) at intercession.159 No doubt he regarded himself as having these characteristics. Dionysius described al-Hajjāj as being capable of shedding blood without pity and, once given authority over Persia, he began to wreak destruction and slaughtered leaders.160

Having worked his way up the shurta he was noticed by the Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik during the preparations for the Iraq campaign of 71–2H designed to dislodge the Zubayrids.161 In 72H Musʿab b. al-Zubayr was defeated in Iraq. In the following year, the caliph sent al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf with a force to deal with the rival Caliph ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr in Mecca,162 during which campaign the Kaʿba was damaged by fire. The head of the defeated ʿAbd Allāh was sent to the Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik.163 Al-Hajjāj ordered the Kaʿba to be rebuilt.164

Al-Hajjāj was rewarded for his success by being appointed governor of Mecca and Medina in 74H. In the same year he was the leader of the annual pilgrimage.165

In 75H the Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik put al-Hajjāj in charge of Iraq, by making him governor of Kūfā and Basra, including the lands in Iran administered from those cities, but excluding Khurāsān and Sistān (Sijistān).166 This followed the death of Bishr b. Marwān (see 9.24) the younger brother of the caliph. In turn al-Hajjāj himself appointed governors or sub-governors, military commanders and administrators.167

Much of al-Hajjāj’s tenure, particularly the early years, was spent putting down insurrection and trying to establish Umayyad control in Iraq and the Iranian lands.

In 77H he defeated the Khārijite rebel Shabīb al-Sabakhah.168 In 78H the Caliph ʿAbbād al-Malik dismissed Umayya b. ʿAbbād Allāh (see 9.56) from Khurāsān and extended al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf’s jurisdiction to include Khurāsān and Sistān. Thus from 78H al-Hajjāj was governor of Kūfā, Basra, Khurāsān, Sistān and Kirmān, giving him control over the Eastern Caliphate and enormous power.169 He brought the armies of Kūfā and Basra together to fight the Khārijites.170

156 Miles 1962.
158 Al-Tabarī, ii, 16; al-Tabarī (trans.), vol. 18, p. 20.
159 Morony 1984, p. 95 citing ash-Shaʿbī.
160 Dionysius, paras. 130–1, translated Palmer, Brock and Hoyland 1993, pp. 200–2.
161 Kennedy 2004, p. 100.
165 Al-Tabarī, ii, 854, 862; al-Tabarī (trans.), vol. 22, pp. 1 and 11: c.f. Khalīfa (trans.), pp. 130–1 he led the pilgrimage in 73H as well as 74H.
167 Morony 1984, p. 37, fn. 41.
169 Al-Tabarī, ii, 1032; al-Tabarī (trans.), vol. 22, p. 176.

7.20 AY or ŠY(?): years 26, 29(?), 47(?) and unclear (uncertain era)
7.96 SYWY: year 2 (unknown era)
7.101 ŠY: years 26 (YE = 37H), 29 (YE = 40H), 38U (YE = 49H)

**Fig. 9.32.10. Anonymous Khusrau type, mint AY or ŠY, 47? (H), 3.07g (Pl. 11, 123)**

**Type 14: jāza hadhā in obverse margin**
These are various issues related to type 13, with jāza hadhā in the second quarter of the obverse margin. The legend is a reference to the coin itself (‘This is allowable’). The mint signatures on the coins are very crudely inscribed and can be variously read as MY, GD, ŠW, SY and AY. Sears has attributed them to Dabīl, the chief city in Armenia and Azerbaijān.223

7.70 MY: Undated or with pseudo-dates crudely copied from other coins (and various other crudely inscribed mint signatures)

**Fig. 9.32.11. Anonymous Khusrau type, mint MY (?), 2.70g (British Museum, 1961, 0506.2)**

**Fig. 9.32.12. Anonymous Khusrau type, mint ŠW (?), 2.92g (British Museum, OR0236)**

**Type 15: tabarak allāh in second quarter obverse margin**224
This coin is only known for one mint / date combination and is very rare.

7.18 AWSYWN (?): year 39?(H)

**Fig. 9.32.13. Anonymous Khusrau type, mint AWSYWN (?), year 39? (H), 3.82g (Pl. 10, 113)**

---

223 Sears 2003b, pp. 86–9.
224 Chapter 6, type 6.C.2.5, p. 52 – tabarak allāh means ‘Blessed God’. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type no.</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Catalogue nos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*28A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend ζολαδό (zolado, Zhulād) with ὅ left (?) and symbol with · either side above</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend βησότο (bēsoto, Bēsut) and symbol below</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*29A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend βησότο (bēsoto, Bēsut) and symbol above</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertain legend (usually only found with Kirmān mints), suggested to be possibly Bactrian ΚΑΙΝΙ (?) (Göbl, p. 172)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend σκαγό (skago, Skago) with ·· left and symbol</td>
<td>282 1166A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*33A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian σκαγό (skago, Skago) with ·· left and symbol with · either side above</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33/a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend σκαγό (skago, Skag) with · above left</td>
<td>891 1166A(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*33/b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend σκαγό (skago, Skago)</td>
<td>259 536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend ζολαδό (zolado, Zhulād)</td>
<td>16 844 860 867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*34A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend ζολαδό (zolado, Zhulād) with · above left and symbol above right</td>
<td>21 858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*34B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bactrian legend ζολαδό (zolado, Zhulād) with symbol above right and unread letter</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 Federov and Kuznetsov 2014, p. 384, who publish a hoard group from the Eastern Sogd which included four drachms of Pērōz (457–84). These include Sogdian countermarks 79, 80 and 83, as well as two further countermarks with Sogdian legends not published by Göbl: x’γ’ν (Khāgān, Turkish title) and wr / κίν (w[a]ʃ[a]n or w[a]kš[a]n).
Arab-Sasanian Numismatics and History during the Early Islamic Period in Iran and Iraq

Volume 2
Part III: Catalogue
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HODGE MEHDI MALEK
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PART III: CATALOGUE

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7.68.2 MLW' (mlw') ﳌⲁⲥⲱ (Contd.)

Salm b. Ziyād (9.46)

Year 68 (H) (Contd.)

861. 3.64g; 33mm; 3h (J’son 490)
As no. 860 (without Bactrian legend)
Obv. margin: - / bism allāh  / - ; cmk 40B at 2h:
\( \text{ζολαδο (zolado)} \) with \( \cdot \cdot \cdot \) above, and 14 at 4h: (symbol)
Rev. margin: either side of \( \cdot \) at 6 and 12h
date: h\( \text{ṣt} \) (or nw\( \text{ṣt} \) 69)

862. 3.87g; 32mm; 3h (J’son 492)
Obv. Name: \( \text{ʾpdlw} / \text{y hzm} \cdot \cdot \cdot \); E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; margin: - / bism allāh  / - ;
Rev. margin: either side of \( \cdot \) at 12h
date: n\( \text{wšt} \)

863. 4.06g; 33mm; 3h (J’son 935)
As no. 862
Rev. date: n\( \text{wšt} \)

864. 2.40g; 27.5mm; 3h (J’son 0690-0120)
As no. 862
Obv. cmk 28A at 3h: \( \text{ζολαδο (zolado)} \) in Bactrian with symbol above (either side)
(Morton and Eden auction 3, 20 May 2003, lot 180)

865. 3.63g; 34mm; 6h (J’son 0690-0121)
As no. 862
Cmk 52 at 2h: h\( \text{twbyt} \) in Pahlavi, and 14 at 3h: (symbol)
(Morton and Eden auction 3, 20 May 2003, lot 180)

866. 4.10g; 33mm; 3h (J’son 0690-0122)
As no. 862 (without cmks)
Rev. date: n\( \text{wšt} \) (Peus auction 372, 30 October 2002, lot 1488)

This countermark is similar to Göbl countermark 40, but instead has \( \cdot \cdot \cdot \) above and the symbol above seems defectively framed.

867. 3.47g; 34.5mm; 12h (J’son 707)
Obv. name: \( \text{ζολαδο γωζ̣ογανο (Bactrian)} \); E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; margin: - / bism allāh  / - ;
Cmk 34 at 2h: (Bactrian legend) \( \text{ζολαδο} \), 34C at 4h: (with \( \cdot / - / \cdot \) left) (Zhulād), uncertain symbols at 9h, and 121 at 10h: X
Rev. margin: (Bactrian legend) - / - / - / am\( \text{ḅerō} \) (ambēro); additional outer circle of dots
date: n\( \text{wšt} \)

868. 4.03g; 31mm; 3h (J’son 494)
As no. 862
Obv. cmk 14 at 3h: (symbol)
Rev. date: h\( \text{pt} \) (Peus auction 372, 30 October 2002, lot 1488)

869. 3.11g; 32.5mm; 12h (J’son 493)
As no. 867
Obv. E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; \( \ast \) left of crown omitted; cmks 19A at 2h: tamga (?), 60A at 4h: (partial Bactrian legend), and 3/e at 10h: (simurgh) with legend above\(^{61}\)
Rev. margin: no •
date: h\( \text{pt} \)

871. 4.04g; 33.5mm; 3h (J’son 497)
As no. 870
Obv. E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder
Rev. margin: either side of \( \cdot \) at 12h
date: d\( \text{wšt} \)

872. 3.61g; 29mm; 3h (J’son 730240)
Obv. name: \( \text{ʾpdlmlyk} / \text{y mlw’n} \cdot \cdot \cdot \); E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; margin: - / bism allāh  / - ;
Cmk 14 at 2h: (symbol)
Rev. date: p\( \text{ncht} \) (Morton and Eden auction 17, 13 December 2005, lot 694)

873. 3.6g; 29mm; 3h (J’son 73040)
Obv. name: \( \text{ʾpdlmlyk} / \text{y mlw’n} \cdot \cdot \cdot \); E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; margin: - / bism allāh  / - ;
Cmk 14 at 2h: (symbol)
Rev. date: d\( \text{wšt} \)

Arab-Hephthalite: Zhulād Gōzgān (9.61)

Year 69 (H)

867. 3.47g; 34.5mm; 12h (J’son 707)
Obv. name: \( \text{ζολαδο γωζ̣ογανο (Bactrian)} \); E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; margin: - / bism allāh  / - ;
Cmk 34 at 2h: (Bactrian legend) \( \text{ζολαδο} \), 34C at 4h: (with \( \cdot / - / \cdot \) left) (Zhulād), uncertain symbols at 9h, and 121 at 10h: X
Rev. margin: (Bactrian legend) - / - / - / am\( \text{ḅerō} \) (ambēro); additional outer circle of dots
date: n\( \text{wšt} \)

Arab-Hephthalite: Zhulād Gōzgān (9.61)

Year 70 (H)

868. 4.03g; 31mm; 3h (J’son 494)
As no. 862
Obv. cmk 14 at 3h: (symbol)
Rev. date: h\( \text{pt} \)

869. 3.11g; 32.5mm; 12h (J’son 493)
As no. 867
Obv. E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; \( \ast \) left of crown omitted; cmks 19A at 2h: tamga (?), 60A at 4h: (partial Bactrian legend), and 3/e at 10h: (simurgh) with legend above\(^{61}\)
Rev. margin: no •
date: h\( \text{pt} \)

871. 4.04g; 33.5mm; 3h (J’son 497)
As no. 870
Obv. E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder
Rev. margin: either side of \( \cdot \) at 12h
date: d\( \text{wšt} \)

872. 3.61g; 29mm; 3h (J’son 730240)
Obv. name: \( \text{ʾpdlmlyk} / \text{y mlw’n} \cdot \cdot \cdot \); E 9; B 9; without \( \cdot \) above shoulder; margin: - / bism allāh  / - ;
Cmk 14 at 2h: (symbol)
Rev. date: p\( \text{ncht} \) (Morton and Eden auction 17, 13 December 2005, lot 694)

This countermark is of the basic type of Göbl 3, but with a cross (?) below and an unread legend above.

\(^{60}\) This countermark is similar to Göbl countermark 40, but instead has \( \cdot \cdot \cdot \) above and the symbol above seems defectively framed.

\(^{61}\) This countermark is of the basic type of Göbl 3, but with a cross (?) below and an unread legend above.