

Numismatic aspects

The general sequence of Parthian coinage (Sellwood 1980) suggests a date of issue during the second half of the first century BC. The general style of the obverse portrait supports this dating. More specifically, Orodes II (c. 57-38 BC) placed either a crescent, or a crescent plus star, or a crescent plus two stars on the obverse of many drachms. The coins catalogued here show a star in crescent. The star in crescent occurs on drachms of Phraates IV (c. 38-2 BC; Sellwood 54) and Phraataces (c. 2 BC - AD 4; Sellwood 56) – although in each of these cases there is an additional symbol below the head, either an eagle (Phraates IV), or winged Nike (Phraataces). The diadem with loop, was to be normal from the reign of Artabanus II (c. AD 10-38).

The reverse shows the traditional figure of a seated archer, together with the mint mark Π and an unusually short legend.

Sellwood attributed the Π mint mark to the north-east mint of Merv (Margiane). Merv was situated in the north-east frontier region of the Parthians, and it is now in Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan, where these drachms were found, shares a modern frontier with Turkmenistan.

Silver drachms bearing the Π mint mark were issued until the reigns of Orodes II (S. 43.8, 46.13, 47.11) and Phraates IV (S. 52.19). Debased copper 'drachms', bearing this mint mark, were issued by Phraates IV (S. 52.39), Phraataces (S. 57.14) and Artabanus II (S. 62.12).

Recent excavations at Merv (Smirnova 2007) substantiate Sellwood's attribution of the Π mint mark to Merv. Many Parthian copper coins were recovered in the excavations. Smirnova described them as being Parthian issues down to the reign of Phraates IV, and then as local issues from the time of Artabanus II (AD 10-38) onwards. Those local issues retain the Π mint mark beneath the bow of the seated archer. The Parthians administered part of their kingdom through satraps appointed by the king, and other parts as several vassal kingdoms (Koshelenko and Philipko 1992). Merv (Margiane) was one such vassal kingdom from around the first century AD, onwards. Mitchiner (1975-6, 606-615; 1987; 2004) and Senior (2001) have discussed other Parthian vassal kingdoms in the east, which were administered by Scythian vassals. Rapin (2007) has discussed Scythians (Kangju) living in Uzbekistan at this period.

The legend on these two drachms is fully legible. The letter forms are consistent with the period of Phraates IV, and the slight corruptions might be expected in the far north-east of the kingdom.

Considered only in respect of the general Parthian coin sequence, the points just made suggest that these drachms were minted at Merv during the reign of Phraates IV.

Historical aspects

This was not a regular issue of Parthian drachms. There was some specific reason for omitting the list of the king's titles, which was normal at this period. There was also some specific reason for citing the issuer's personal name, which was exceptional at this period. The legend simply names 'King Phraates, Arsaces', which is very short and unusual.

Phraates IV ascended the throne c. 38 BC, the year after his elder brother, Pacorus I, had been killed while on campaign. Phraates also appears to have helped their father, Orodes II, to his death. Phraates secured his throne by arranging the deaths of various relatives. He rapidly gained a reputation for cruelty.

Phraates was expelled from the throne, and Tiridates was installed as king of Parthia, c. 29 BC. Combat ensued, with the result that the Romans re-installed Tiridates on the Parthian throne, which he held until 26 BC. Errington and Curtis (2007) have recently discussed further details. Phraates took refuge in the east, where he mobilised a Scythian army, and subsequently regained the throne of Parthia with Scythian help. Meanwhile, Tiridates issued tetradrachms at Seleucia, dated in the Seleucid era by both month and year (Sellwood 1980, 55.1-55.14: SE 284, 285, 286, corresponding to 28, 27 and 26 BC)

Justin (XLII, 5) put it this way: "Having then for a long time wearied the neighbouring people, and at last the Scythians, with entreaties for aid, he was at last restored to his throne by a powerful Scythian force. During his absence the Parthians had made Tiridates king, who, when he heard of the approach of the Scythians, fled with a great body of his partisans to Caesar, who was then carrying on a war in Spain".

Both kings were also named by the poet Horace: Tiridates (fearing imminent ejection) in *Odes* 1.26.5 and Phraates (recently restored to the throne) in *Odes* 2.2.17.

The same political pattern was to be replicated in the next generation. Then, the pro-Roman Vonones I (c. AD 8-12) at first defeated Artabanus II (c. AD 10-38). The latter then regained his throne with the help of Scythians from the east.

Discussion

Placed in their numismatic and historical context, the two drachms published here can best be interpreted as belonging to a military campaign issue. The coins were probably minted to pay the Scythian army, which Phraates recruited.

Phraates was an exile in the east. He was not the *de facto* Parthian king. His simple inscription just affirms his legitimacy. He, King Phraates, was the legitimate holder of the title Arsaces. Tiridates was the *de facto* king of Parthia. Phraates, the exile, recruited a Scythian army. He had to pay the army. These two drachms, minted at Merv, appear to illustrate one of the methods he used to pay his army, an army that would soon afterwards (re)install him on the throne of Parthia. The coins can be dated c. 27 BC, or very close to that date. Their area of circulation appears to have been restricted to the regions where the Scythians were living.

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A UNIQUE COIN OF THE SHADDĀDID RULER, ASHOT IBN SHĀWŪR¹

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A monograph devoted to the investigation of the coinage of the Shaddādids, the Kurdish dynasty that ruled in Armenia and Arrān in the IV–VI centuries AH, has recently been published by A.

¹ I would like to thank Dr. Lutz Ilisch (Tübingen) for the idea of preparing this paper as well as for many helpful discussions which resulted in the correct attribution of the specimen.

Koyfman, V. Lebedev and D. Markov². That long-awaited study closes many lacunae while considering the coinage of the Shaddāids, provides a clear typology, metrology as well as some observations on die links. However, many aspects concerning several genealogical issues related to that dynasty require some more attention from scholars. In this short paper one such issue is reconsidered using both historical evidence and numismatic data.

In 1985 G. Hennequin published a coin³, which, however, was misread and wrongly attributed to (*Aṣwaṭ b. Sā'ūn* or *Ṣā'ūn?*). That billon coin, listed in the catalogue as *AE (AR?)*⁴ (5.66 g; 20.5 cm; die axis 8:30; Fig. 1) has the following legends:

<p>Obverse: <i>central legend</i> لا اله الا الله السلطان المعظم شاهانشاه البارسلان ... <i>marginal legend</i> ... بامر الله ...</p>	<p>Reverse: ... الامير الاجل العادل شرف الدو لة ابو علي اشوط بن شاوور</p>
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Obv: *There is no God but Allāh / Sulṭān Supreme / Shāhanshāh / Alp Arslān*

Rev: *Amīr the respectable / the just, protector of the sta / te Abū 'Alī Ashūṭ / bin Shāwūr.*



Fig. 1. The coin of Ashot b. Shāwūr I

The marginal legend of the obverse would probably have included the قائم بامر الله (*al-Qā'im bi-āmrallāh*) and, possibly, also the mint name and date. Some observations have shown that the coin can be linked to Ashot b. Shāwūr. He was the son of Abū al-Aswār Shāwūr I b. Faḍl I, who ruled in Dvin from AH 413/1022-3 AD and in Ganja from AH 441/1049-50 AD, died in AH 459/1066-7 AD. Ashot's mother was daughter of the Armenian king Gurgēn I (AH 355-381/966-991 AD)⁵ of the neighbouring Kingdom of Tashir-Dzoraget (Lori)⁶, and granddaughter of Ashot III of Ani.

The Armenian name 'Ashot' (arabic اشوط) was one of the ancestral names of the Bagratids for a long time. In the main Bagratid line of Ani there were three kings called Ashot. The tradition of giving a son the name of his mother's grandfather was popular among the Kurds, Armenians and Georgians. Apparently, this fact explains why the son of Shāwūr I obtained the Christian name Ashot. According to K. Yuzbashyan Abū al-Aswār Shāwūr

I also had an unofficial Christian name of Davit' with a nickname Dunaci, which means *David of Dvin*⁷.

The marriage of Shāwūr I to the daughter of Gurgēn I, the sister of King Davit' Anholin (The Landless), was very important for the Shaddāids, because the Tashir-Dzoraget kingdom was one of the powerful Christian states that bordered the Shaddādid emirate⁸.

In AH 457/1065 AD, the Shaddādid emirate was subjugated to the Saljūqs. In 459/1067 Alp Arslān gave both Shakkī and Tiflīs to Faḍl II b. Shāwūr I, the ruler of Ganja. But after the Saljūqs departed from there, Faḍl II was captured by the king of Kakhet'i and sent to Tiflīs. Some time later the brother of Faḍl II Ashot b. Shāwūr I was crowned in Ganja. However, the next year the Saljūq commander, Sāw Tegin, liberated Faḍl II from prison and the latter returned to Ganja rapidly. It seems that, after repossessing his own domains, Faḍl II struck the coin which is the subject of this paper. If so, then the possible issue of this specimen can be limited between the month of Shawwāl of the year 460 / August 1068 and Jumādā II of the year 461 / April 1069⁹. Thus, that period includes the time of the reigns of both Alp Arslān (AH 455-465) and the caliph al-Qā'im (AH 422-467). It should be also noted that while the same *laqab* الامير الاجل العادل (the amīr, the respectable, the just) normally appeared on coins of both Shāwūr I and Faḍl II¹⁰, the *laqab* شرف الدولة (protector of the state) does not appear on any other Shaddādid coins. At the same time, the *kunya* ابو علي Abū 'Alī, which no doubt belonged to Ashot b. Shāwūr I, is now known only from this specimen. It is remarkable that the coin does not bear any ornamental patterns, unlike the other coins of the last Shaddāids struck under the Saljūqs¹¹.

Confirmation of the correct way of writing the name Ashot as اشوط instead of اشوت (as in the catalogue) can be found in the *Ta'rīkh al-Bāb wa Sharwān*¹² as well as from the seal of the Armenian king Ashot I Bagratid (855-891 AD), the son of Smbat (سنباط اشوط بن) (Fig. 2)¹³.

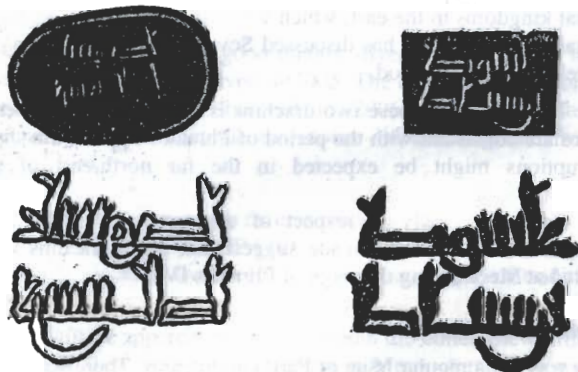


Fig. 2. The seal of Ashot I

² Lebedev V., Markov D., Koyfman A. *Monetnoe delo i monetnoe obraschenie Gandzhyskogo emirata Shaddadidov* (ser. X - XI vv.). Moscow, 2006. For the coin of Minūchīhr b. Shāwūr I Shaddadid (AH 462-512) of Ani see: Kouymjian D. *The Unique Coin of the Shirvānshāh Minūchīhr II Dated A.H. 555/1160 AD.* // *Studies in Honor of George C. Miles.* Beirut, 1974. P. 339-46.

³ Hennequin G. *Catalogue des Monnaies Musulmanes de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Asie pré-mongole, les Saljūqs et leurs successeurs.* Paris, 1985.

⁴ Hennequin, *op. cit.* P. 47; type LVII, coin No. 64, Fig. 1.

⁵ The founder of the Tashir-Dzoraget branch of the Bagratid family, wrongly called by Minorsky and some scholars Kīwrike (I) (see Mat'evosyan, *op. cit.* P. 111).

⁶ On the Kingdom of Tashir-Dzoraget see: Mat'evosyan R. *Tashir-Dzoraget (X d. - XII d. skizb).* Yerevan, 1982.

⁷ *Povestvovanie vardapeta Aristakesa Lastivertci.* With an introduction and comments by K. Yuzbashyan. Moscow, 1968. P. 159.

⁸ Minorsky V. *Studies in Caucasian History: I. New Light on the Shaddadids of Ganja. II. The Shaddadids of Ani. III. Prehistory of Saladin.* London, 1953. P. 65.

⁹ *Ibid.* P. 24.

¹⁰ Lebedev, *op. cit.* P. 60.

¹¹ *Ibid.* P. 132.

¹² Minorsky, *op. cit.* P. 24.

¹³ Krachkovskaya V. *Pechat' bagratida Ashota s arabskoy nadpis'yu* // *Kratkie Soobscheniya Instituta Material'noy Kul'tury.* Vol. XII (1946). P. 112.