

INTRODUCTION

The coins presented in this catalogue provide an overview over almost 600 years of Iranian monetary history, if one takes the word “Iranian” in a general sense. At first glance, for political as well as religious reasons, the treatment of Sasanian coins together with the issues of the Arab governors of the Umayyad period may appear very unusual. When it comes to typology, metrology and also mint administration, late Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian coinages form a continuum, and therefore this way of cataloguing makes sense. It also emphasizes the importance and impact of Sasanian numismatics on early Islamic coinage. For the same reason, even later coin series such as the issues of the Abbasid governors of Tabaristan and the imitations of Wahram V drachms from Bukhara have been included.

The catalogue contains altogether 282 coins.¹ Dividing them in the five main groups of Sasanian and Sasanian-type coinages produces the following material distribution:

Sasanian coins	165 coins
Arab-Sasanian coins	94 coins
Ispahbads of Tabaristan	2 coin
Abbasid governors of Tabaristan	17 coins
Sasanian-style coins from Bukhara	4 coins

Further details on rulers and mint places can be found in the respective sections of the index (3.2. and 3.3.). The personal and geographical names are given in simplified forms according to the same criteria as in SNS Paris-Berlin-Vienna.²

As for the typological references, for those rulers which are covered in one of the SNS volumes published so far, the type numbering is followed by the entry “SNS”; for the other, references are given to Göbl 1971, indicated by “SN”. For the Arab-Sasanian, Tabaristan and Bukhara issues, a typological numbering of its own has been introduced.

Apart from their numismatic value itself, the coins covered here are also noteworthy since a substantial number originate from the collections of two great scholars. Almost all the Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian holdings of the Israel Museum come from the collection of that outstanding scholar of Islamic numismatics, Paul Balog, and many of the specimens from the Israel Antiquity Authority once belonged to the famous archaeologist Sir Flinders Petrie.

Apart from the main collections gathered here, the present study also contains a fascinating hoard of Late Sasanian copper coins housed at the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. It consists of roughly 1850 pieces ranging from the first half of the sixth century to the 20’s of the second reign of Khusro II. Most of the coins, however, are not official issues, but are of deviant style, workmanship, and also of lower weight than the unquestionably official coins. Because of their sheer number, as well as the fact that the majority of the coins in the hoard are not fully attribut-

¹ There are the fragments of one or more Late Sasanian or Arab-Sasanian drachm in the Kadman Numismatic Pavilion (K/52812) which, due to the fact that it was not even possible to figure out how many coins these small silver pieces represent have not been catalogued. Also some Sasanian drachms pictures of which are in the files of the IAA, but which I could not check in original, and of which partially no useful photos were available have not been included here.

² Alram/Gyselen 2003; Schindel 2004.

able, I have decided to not include the hoard in the sylloge proper, but rather to present it as an appendix (*Appendix I*).

In the course of compiling and finalizing this catalogue, I could rely on the help of many persons from a wide range of different institutions, without whom it would have been impossible to complete this research project. I am highly indebted to the museum curators of the collections who made the material available to me, and granted me the permission to publish it: Dan Barag from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem; Donald Ariel from the Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem; Haim Gitler from the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; and Cecilia Meir from the Kadman Numismatic Pavilion at the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. However, it would not suffice merely to mention the formal permission of publication; all curators mentioned above provided the best possible working facilities, and helped me in every possible way, and thus I encountered a truly unique atmosphere while working in these collections in Israel. Michael Alram has most kindly advised me in this project and its preparation, and made possible its publication. Equally, I have to thank for the invaluable suggestions he made regarding the manuscript. Warm thanks go to Klaus Vondrovec for his assistance with the database. I am obliged to my colleagues Bernhard Woytek, Matthias Pfisterer and once again Klaus Vondrovec for valuable advice and discussion. The contributions of Robert Schaaf, however, are invaluable: He supported me with adding useful comments as well as many important coins from his collection, and also went through the tedious task of making my original English text understandable. For the arrangement of the plates I am grateful Gerald Reisenbauer. The realisation of this entire study would not have been possible if I had not been granted a Government of Israel Scholarship for 2000/2001. In addition to the preparation of this catalogue, it also gave me the opportunity to enjoy an incomparable time in the land of Israel. Special thanks go to Shraga Qedar, who not only helped me in every possible way with the preparation of this study, but also – through many hours of numismatic and non-numismatic conversation – made my stay in Jerusalem even more enjoyable than it already was. After quite some time when I was occupied with other projects, I have been granted a trip to Israel in the course of the academic exchange programme between the Austrian and the Israel Academy of Sciences; my thanks are due to Bernhard Plunger from the Austrian side and Bob Lapidot from the Israeli one. Finally, I have to thank my mother and my late father for their help and understanding.

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