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ARAMAIC TRACES THROUGH COINS IN THE IRANIAN WORLD

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Aramaic language(s) in its four phases with different scripts on various materials have been found in Iran (mostly from the western part of the land where Aramaic-speaking communities lived). Aramaic language traces in the Iranian world have remained in a large diversity on the coins. Besides some reigns whose coins bear Aramaic phrases, some others just minted coins with Aramaic derived legends and/or used ideograms on their coins. Almost from 3th BC to 10th centuries AD Aramaic words with Aramaic, Pahlavi, Parthian, Sogdian and Chorasmian legends used as ideograms in the coinage. Due to producing ideograms, it is impossible to read the original pronunciation of the words but this heritage can introduce a concept of a larger Aramaic presence in the Iranian world.

The earliest type of ideograms on the coins can be found on Fratarkā's coinage in the Pārs province roughly from 3th BC and the latest belongs to Būyids' amir of the 10th century, Rokn al-Dawla, who ruled in Rayy (al-Muḥammadiya). During this period, circa 1300 years, some dynasties struck their own coins with ideograms in a large territory from the Middle East to Transoxania and another one also used these coins in their daily deals as a currency.

<MLKA> “king”, <GDE> “splendor” and <BRE> “son” have been used more than other words. Besides the kings, some local rulers, especially from Transoxania, started to mint coins with their titles, with the most frequency of <MRAY> “ruler”. One can find a rare use of <MLKTA> “queen” as a feminine title in Sāsānid kingdom. Using Aramaic ideograms on the Arab-Sāsānids' coins has the most variety and according to coins' inscriptions,

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they used different words and phrases, mostly translated from Arabic to Pahlavi.

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Aramaic languages have preserved a widespread treasure and transferred it from the west to the east. The specialists have classified the Aramaic languages under the *Western Semitic* group of *Semitic languages* branch, which beside the four other major branches including *Cushitic*, *Berber*, *Chadic* and *Egyptian* are of a main language class named *Afro-Asiatic languages family* [Lipiński 1997].

The earliest Aramaic documents, which have been discovered hereunto, are some inscriptions which go back to 9–10 century BC [Rubin 2008, 89; Lipiński 1975, 12] and until now, Aramaic dialects are still alive and being used in daily life of native Aramaic speakers. These documents have been inscribed on a great variety of materials including: *Bone*, *Clay*, *Ivory*, *Metal*, *Papyrus*, *Parchment*, *Plaster*, *Stone* and *Wood*. Coins as our materials for this paper almost wholly inscribed on *Gold*, *Silver*, *Bronze* and *Copper*.

Aramaic phases and numismatic evidences

Due to some chronological views, the scholars have classified the Aramaic languages into five major phases¹:

1. **Old Aramaic** (roughly 925 to 700 BC): including the earliest manifestations of the language, in this phase, there are no vast evidences and most are inscriptions on stones and other materials inscribed by Phoenician alphabet [Fitzmyer 1979, 60–61] but there is no instance for numismatics². Most ancient works have found from 10 century BC in some regions in *North Mesopotamia & Syria* (*Tell Feheriye*, *Hadātu*, *Tell Ḥalaf*, *Breğ*, *Zinçirli* & *Tell Sfire*) and *Palestine* (*Tell Dan*) [Müller-Kessler 2018].

¹ Lipiński divided these languages into [Lipiński 1997, 61–70]: a) Early Aramaic, b) Official or Imperial Aramaic, c) Standard Literary Aramaic, d) Middle Aramaic, e) Western Late Aramaic, f) Eastern Late Aramaic, g) Neo-Aramaic. As it is obvious, the classification by Lipiński is a chronological and geographical mixture.

² It is well known, that the earliest coinage have started by Lydian's approximately 650 BC, and the first types of the coins have not any legends; it seems that the first ones inscribed by Greek legends.

2. **Imperial or Official Aramaic** (700 to 200 BC): replacing *Akkadian* as an official language for *Assyrian* and *Babylonian*, it was the second phase of the Aramaic which have been used for bureaucratic and correspondence in three great empires including *Neo-Assyrian*, *Neo-Babylonian* and *Achaemenid* kingdoms.

Collapsing the *Lydian* kingdom under King *Croesus of Lydia* (c. 560–546 BC) by *Cyrus II*, roughly in 547 BC, Persians spread the minting tradition by Lydian and the history of numismatics entered a new level, using it as an accepted material for trading in the dominations of the empire. The discoveries in ancient Near East show the importance of this phase of Aramaic and in this period one can find some Aramaic coins with Aramaic legends³ like those of *YHD*⁴ /*Yēhud*/ silver coinage [Ronen 1998, 122] and *ŠHRW* coinage [Gitler, Tal 2006] in Palestine under the Persian rule (**Fig. 1, 2**).

3. **Middle Aramaic** (200 BC to 200 AD): spreading Greek and replacing Aramaic, the language did not vanish but fell into a new level so that we can find a variety in this phase in contrary with the former standard Aramaic [Yildiz 2000, 34]⁵. In this phase, the materials

³ For Palestine see [Hübner 2014]; see also for a short survey for *yhd* coins' chronology [Tal 2011, 449, *ft.* 7]. In other satrapies have been found some coins in Aramaic too; e.g. For Egypt in Persian periods (27 and 30 Dynasties of Egypt) [Muhs 2016, 173–210]. See also [Harrison 1982].

There are some coins belong to <mzdy> /*Mzdai*/ Satrap of Cilicia (c. 331–328 BC) with <b'ltrz>, <mzdy zy 'l 'brnhr' w hlk> and so on, in Aramaic on obverse. Another coins bearing <whšw(r)> in Aramaic legends which are not fully recognized by scholars whose coins are these? Just some have Aramaic inscription which read by scholars in different ways; one is <nrgr> as an abbreviation for <*'nrgr> i.e. *Andragoras*, Satrap of Parthia circa 245–238 BC [Kosmin 2014, 60; Chrubasik 2016, 41; Lerner 1999, 24]. Frye thinks it can be considered as a sign for continuity of Aramaic in Seleucid realm [Frye 1984, 164].

⁴ It seems after overthrow Persian rule which were using Aramaic as their *lingua franca*, the legend have been changed to its Hebrew equivalent i.e. *yhdh* /*Yēhudāh*/ [Gitler, Lorber 2006, 13; Lykke 2012, 43–70].

⁵ Yildiz, according to old-fashioned work of Altheim-Stiehl, said about Arsacid Aramaic i.e. the official language of Parthian/Arsacid Empire [Yildiz 2000, 36–37]; however we know the language was not really Aramaic and using ideograms should not lead us to believe that there was an Arsacid Aramaic as an official language. Although we know that under the Parthian

which bear Aramaic inscriptions increased alongside the variety of the dialects and scripts used by different Aramaic speakers. In this phase, the influence of other languages on Aramaic increased so that there are some Aramaic texts with anomaly in grammatical issues; it also can be counted as the beginning of wide usage of Aramaic Ideograms. Due to some reasons like relative independence in coinage, there were many numismatic evidences in this period, either in Aramaic or as Ideograms.

4. **Late Aramaic** (200 to 700 AD): at the way of changing Aramaic from a standard version to dialects, the dialects took many different features in this phase; but the most important event which took place was the rising of Islam and spreading its language i.e. Arabic so that replaced the usage of other languages especially in chancellery where decisions were made especially about minting and writing [Creason 2008, 109; Fitzmyer 1979, 62].



Fig. 1. Reverse of an Obols of a *šrw* coin [Gitler, Tal 2006, 49]



Fig. 2. Reverse of a drachm of a *yhd* coin [Gitler 2011, 22]

5. **Modern Aramaic** (700 AD to the present): spreading Islam and Arabic language in the districts where have Aramaic native speakers, Aramaic gave its place to Arabic as official and colloquial language in many districts but it remained as a secondary language or language of prayers in many Jewish, Christin and Mandaic Aramaic speakers alongside small population of Muslim Aramaic speakers in Syria [Creason 2008, 109–110; Fitzmyer 1979, 62]. The remained population never used Aramaic for minting but they continued to make lite-

kingdom many local dialects continued to their life and as said it lead Aramaic using into a new level especially through the vast discoveries of this usage outside the chancellery.

rature in their dialects; however using Aramaic ideogramic words as a tradition, was still alive on the coins at the beginning of this period.

Summing up the aforesaid, Aramaic words on the coins either in Aramaic language context or as Ideogram were in use in four Aramaic phases including: Imperial, Middle, Late and the beginning of Modern Aramaic. In these four phases, beginning with Imperial Aramaic, we have some coins, the most of them with a usual style:

1. King's name with the title mlk('). [writing]
2. Theophoric phrases for getting the favor of Gods. [writing]
3. King's head. [image]
4. Some artificial motifs like fire, sacrificing and so on. [image]

There are unusual or of different styles too, but a combination of these four elements made the great part of coins. Passing time from Imperial Aramaic to later phases, one can find changing the language on the coin from Aramaic to local ones; although the coins' legends changed more slowly from Aramaic to local scripts which derived from it. Consider that we have not a great diversity in the phrases on the coins and due to this reason; it should consider that the basic phase for Aramaic usage on the coins is the first one i.e. Imperial Aramaic.

Ideogram as second side of Aramaic

Coins are under a writing tradition which is more conservative than inscriptions and literature and due to some reasons preserved the earliest patterns; for instance, the composition "king's name + MLKA" is very common. This conservative feature of writing tradition is one powerful element to reduce the speed of its transmission than the language. So using Aramaic words in writing, for translated words in language is not a strange thing but maybe the story of ideograms on the coins has a different story than the inscriptions and literature, referring the essence of the coins. So how this tradition has developed or what is the real pronunciation of some words in local languages is really uncertain and some readings are inconvincible; nonetheless coins are the only remaining materials of some dynasties.

Aramaic words about the numismatics in Iranian languages

Alongside some Greek or Iranian original terms for numismatic, there are some words used in Iranian texts and inscriptions which derived from Aramaic:

I. Zūzā: as an ideogram in Middle Iranian writings; for instance as <Z̄WZ̄N'> /drahm/ “drachm” in Middle Persian, derived from Aramaic zūzā of Akkadian zūzu.

II. Mā[‘ā]: as an ideogram in Middle Persian texts, for Persian /dāng/ “obol”.

III. Pšīṭā: the Pahlavi word for copper coins is *pišīz*, Henning believed this word as a loanword from Aramaic *pšīṭā* “scale (of a fish)” (cf. *al-Fals* in Arabic “cooper coin” beside “scale of a fish”; also cf. Persian “*Deram-e Māhī*” Fish’s drachm) is an ancient confusing of two different Greek word i.e. φόλλις and φολλίς [Frye 1950, 113].

Some notes

1. There are some graffiti on the coins bear ideogram words, for instance <TB̄> /nēw/ representing the coin’s quality [Daryaee 2017, 265]; but we do not discuss the graffiti here.

2. It is very important to consider that the words on the coins, apart from some local features, used same words in different senses; for instance, mlk(’)/MLK(A) used as a title by great emperors beside some local rulers.

3. Some rulers especially from eastern Iran are the only one who we know or who have coins (with Ideogram); but we numbered special numbers.

4. Despite the progress of numismatic studies, there are some different views about same issues due to uncertainty of reading, lacking further information as well as bad preservation of many ancient coins.

5. Numismatist in many cases did not treat the accepted ways that the linguists are treating; by the way we use Mackenzie’s method in CPD 1971 for unifying the paper.

6. In some cases the false or rejected views repeated or recited again. I did my best to find the newest views but maybe this paper also has some old-fashioned information which should be improved in later versions⁶.

7. There are many problems about chronology, name and dating coins of some dynasties especially about Eastern Hephthalites.

8. The coins’ photos here are mostly chosen from <https://www.ac-search.info/>, <https://www.coinarchives.com>, <http://pro.geo.univie.ac>.

⁶ The best instance is Michael Mitchiner’s works which represent his views as a pioneer in such studies and of course has its problems which should be treated carefully.

at/projects/khm/ and <https://www.zeno.ru/> alongside the books and articles which cited.

Aramaic traces evidence on the coins

1. **Arsacid dynasty:** a well-known Empire who ruled during 247 BC to 224 AD in great part of Asia. Aršak I (247–211 BC), founder of Arsacid dynasty used word *krny* in Aramaic legends on his coins alongside the Greek as powerful heritage of Seleucid coinage and since Aršak I and aftermath, using *krny* on coins was common [Sinisi 2012, 64] (**Fig. 3**). For the first time since Aršak I, Vologases I (c. 51–78 AD), beside the Greek legends on the reverse, minted the abbreviation of his name and the title MLKA i.e. <wl M> for <wlgšy MLKA> /Walgaš šāh/ in Parthian legends, alongside the king's portrait on the obverse [Olbrycht 2016, 222] (**Fig. 4**); Mehrdad IV (c. 129–140 AD), was the first Arsacid who minted his complete name and title as <mtrdt MLKA> /mehrđād šāh/ on his coin [Wiesehöfer 1998, 168]. One can find another names beside the title in Parthian coins including: <wlgšy MLKA> /Walgaš šāh/ (Walgaš III, IV, V), <ḥwsrw MLKA> /Husraw šāh/ (Husraw II) and <'rtbnw MLKA> /Ardawān šāh/ (Ardawān IV) [Henning 1958, 40].



Fig. 3. Obverse of Aršak I's coin minted in Mehrđād-kard (Nisā)



Fig. 4. Obverse of Walgaš I's minted in Ekbātān (Hamadān)

2. **Fratarkās:** they ruled during circa 230 BC to 210 AD in Pārs and minted in their rulers' name [Potts 2007, 275]. The early Fratarkās and especially Baydād (**Fig. 5**), Ardaxšīr I, Vahbarz, Vādfradād I used the “prtrk' ZY ALHYA” in their coins. Soon after Dārēv I, they named themselves MLKA (for instance <d'ryw MLKA>) and a little bit aftermath introduce themselves as *krny* in Aramaic script [Rezakhani

2013, 777]. Their coins' inscriptions also has two another style as <d'ryw MLKA BRE wtrpdt MLKA> and <kp't MLKA BRE nmwpt>.



Fig. 5. Baydād's coin with Aramaic legends c. 280 BC

3. The Artaxēsīd dynasty⁷ of Armenia: the Artaxēsīd dynasty of Armenia established by Artaxēs I⁸ (c. 189–160 BC) in Artaxat⁹ 189 BC and ended under the co-ruling of Tigran V¹⁰ and his queen Erato¹¹ in 12 AD. Most of Artaxēsīd's coins bear Greek legends but there are some coins attributed to Artaxēs II (30–20 BC) bearing his portrait on obverse and either a dog, bee, eagle or man on reverse beside the Aramaic title MLKA and due to the bad preservation of such coins, scholars think the full inscription is <rtḥšsy MLKA> “Artaxēs, the king” (Fig. 6). These coins can be considered as outstanding evidences beside the well-known border stones of Artaxēs I, inscribed in Aramaic [Nurpetlian 2008–2009, 130–131; Vardanyan, Vardanyan 2008].



Fig. 6. Artaxēs II's coin with Aramaic legends c. 30–20 BC

⁷ Արտաշեսյան արքայատոհմ

⁸ Արտաշես Առաջին Բարեպաշտ

⁹ Արտաշատ

¹⁰ Տիգրան Ե

¹¹ Էրատո

4. **Elymais:** Elymaean rulers reigned in Southwestern Iran during 2 BC to 3 AD, used a developed version of Aramaic script in their inscriptions and coins [Hansman 1998]. Henning believes that the language behind such coins with Aramaic legends is not really Aramaic and they are representation of some Ideograms for Elymaean's language [Potts 1999, 386]. Elymaean rulers i.e. Orodes I, Kamniskires-Orodes, Orodes II (**Fig. 7**), Phraates and Orodes III mint their coins with Aramaic legends [Potts 1999, 399–400]. Orodes I was the first Elymaean king used Aramaic legends beside Greek [Čitsāz 2015a, 254] but soon after that, the Aramaic legends remained on the Obverse and Greek legends moved to the Reverse [Čitsāz 2015b, 384]. Many Elymaean coins only bear the king's name with MLKA but someone are longer e.g. <wrwd MLKA BRE wrwd> “King Orodes, son of Orodes”.



Fig. 7. Orodes II's coin with Elymaean Aramaic legends c. 200 AD

5. **Characene:** also known as Mēšān or Mēšūn (Messene) in Middle Persian; they either as a vassals under Parthian or independent rulers, ruled during 127 BC to 222 AD in southern Mesopotamia and started to mint, firstly in Greek and in a period uninscribed but also with Aramaic legends e.g. <ybyng'y MLKA> “Abinergios (?) the king”, <m'g zy 'st'by'z MLKA>, possibly “Maga, (son) of king Atambelos” (**Fig. 8**). Because of lacking further information, the Aramaic coins of Messene are undated [Hansman 1991]¹².

¹² For a comprehensive survey about Characene in the available materials see: [Schuol, 2000].



Fig. 8. Māga's coin with Characene Aramaic legends c. 210 AD

6. **Unknown Aramaic coins of Armenia:** there are some unknown Aramaic coins found in Armenia which firstly read by Eduard Khurshidian as <tsp mtrd[t] ML[KA]> /Tosp Mihrdaht šāh/ “Mitridat King (of the realm/demesne) Tosp¹³(?)” attributing to Mehrdād [Khurshudian, 1998] and later emended by Gerd Gropp as <trdt MLKA 'r'n> “Tiridates King of Arran” attributing to Tīridāt¹⁴ [Gropp 2008] but Jack Nurpetlian believes no one are fully convincible due to some reasons [Nurpetlian 2015, 16] (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9. An instance of the unknown coins with Aramaic legends, found in Armenia

Because of his Armenian tiara, the king should be an Armenian and as we know, in Armenian history, a Mehrdād by name, Mithridates of Iberia¹⁵, an Arsākian¹⁶ king (i.e. the Arsacid dynasty of Iberia) who

¹³ Tušbā i.e. the historical name of Van district.

¹⁴ Տրդատ

¹⁵ Միհրդատ Իբերացի

¹⁶ არშაკունები or არშაკունյան

reigned there, during two period circa 35–37 AD and 42–51 AD and three (or four) Tīridāt by names, who were Aršākuni¹⁷ kings (i.e. the Arsacid dynasty of Armenia).

7. **Gondopharid Dynasty:** they were Indo-Parthians who ruled roughly 20 BC to 1 AD in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Northwestern India and used Parthian, Pahlavi and Aramaic legends in their coins beside Greek and Kharoṣṭhī.

For instance, on the obverse of King Abdagases II's coin is written with the Parthian legends: <'bdgšy MLKYN MLKA BRE s'nbry MLKA> /Abdagaš šāhān šāh puhr Sānabar šāh/ "Abdagases King of Kings, son of Sānabares, the king" and on its reverse is inscribed: <'bdgšy MLKYN MLKA RBA [.....] t'....y> /Abdagaš šāhān šāh wuzurg.../ "Abdagases King of Kings, great..." [Sarkhosh Curtis, Stewart 2007, 32–34; Grenet, Bopearachchi 1999, 74–76] (**Fig. 10**).



Fig. 10. King Abdagases II's coin [Grenet, Bopearachchi 1999, 81]

Some coins in Middle Persian script have <'d'hšy> instead of <'bdgšy> in Parthian legends and <'wd> in Aramaic as an acronym for Abdagases II [Brunner 1982]. On a coin with Pahlavi legends is written <pr't MLKAN MLKA> [Dobbins 1971, 140]; and on another one with Parthian legends <s'nbry MLKA gbwz'n> /Sānabar šāh Gabuzān/ "Sānabar, king, (son of) Gabuzān" [Baratin 2009, 537].

8. **Coins of Naḵšab:** there is a probability that the rulers of Naḵšab used the title <MRAY> on their coins with Sogdian legends alongside the words in Greek [Naymark 2016, 59]. Here is a coin from 1st–3rd c. AD by <'št'tw> /Āštāt/¹⁸ which bears Greek legends on reverse and Sogdian inscription on the obverse (**Fig. 11**).

¹⁷ Արշակունիներ արքայաժողով

¹⁸ Some scholars read the name as <'št'tm> /Āštām/ [Zeimal 1983, 251].



Fig. 11. Aštāt's (?) coin with Sogdian and Greek legends c. 1st–3rd AD¹⁹

9. **Sāsānid kingdom:** establishing Sāsānid kingdom in 224 AD by Ardašīr I, they started to mint and as a tradition which represented in their inscriptions, their coins bear a couple of ideograms to end of the dynasty in 652 AD too, including: <MLKA>, <MLKAn MLKA>, <MLKAn MLKTA>, <ORḤYA>, <GDE>, <BRE>, <NWRA>, <ZY>, <MNW>, <MN>, <W>. As a case of transmission in writing <NWRA> changed to <'twry> /ādur/ (cf. ORḤYA vs. bgy).

The patterns which used by Sāsānid kings are very various but, for instance, Ardašīr I's (224–240 AD) coin bears <bgy 'rthštr MLKA | BRE bgy p'pky MLKA> /bay Ardašīr šāh | pus bay Pābag šāh/ (**Fig. 12**), that of Šahpuhr I (240–272 AD) <mzdysn bgy šḥpwḥry MLKAn MLKA 'yr'n MNW čt1y MN yzd'n> /mazdēsn bay Šahpuhr šāhān šāh Ērān kē čih az yazdān/ and so on.



Fig. 12. Ardašīr I's coin with Pahlavi legends c. 224–240 AD

¹⁹ Mitchiner attributed this coin to Dahaeen Sakas in Chorasmia in Middle period (c. 250–130 BC) and read the non-Greek inscription as “ATA” [Mitchiner 1973, 19; pl. I].

During Sāsānid rule some usurpers or rival claimants raised who minted in their names; they were Bahrām VI Čōbīn (590–591), Vistahm (591–596), Šahrwārāz (629), Farroḡ-Hormozd (630–631), Hormizd VI (630–631), Husraw IV (631) and Farroḡzād Husraw V (631). Their coins are like typical Sāsānid coins and just has <GDE> as ideogram.

10. **Indo-Sāsānid (Kušanšāhs):** they were Sāsānid rulers on Kušan district in eastern Iran and minted with Pahlavi and Bactrian legends [Schindel 2016]. They inscribed their name in Pahlavi with ideograms almost in three way; for instance, Ardašīr has minted with <rthštr MLKA> (**Fig. 13**) and <mzdysn bgy 'rthštr RBA kwš'n MLKA> and Hormizd' coins bear <mzdysn bgy 'wḥrmzdy RBA kwš'n MLKAN MLKA> “Mazda-worshipping Majesty Hormizd Great King of Kings of Kušan” [Brunner 1974, 151].



Fig. 13. Ardašīr Kušanšāh's coin with Pahlavi legends²⁰

11. **Euthydemus I in Boḡārā:** imitations of the Greco-Bactrian king's coins, Euthydemus I in Boḡārā, represents using the <MRAY> title with Sogdian legends. The coins of this period distinguished by a tiara and Sogdian and Greek legends (from c. 2nd to 4th cc. AD) rather than those ones with diadem and only Greek legends (from c. 1st BC to 1th cc. AD) [Zeimal 1983, 253] (**Fig. 14**).

²⁰ <http://www.iranicaonline.org/app/webroot/uploads/files/Kushan/kushan-shahs-02-pl1e.jpg>



Fig. 14. Euthydemus I's coin with Sogdian and Greek legends c. 260–195 BC

12. **Indo-Parthian Kingdom:** a unique coin from first half of third century, belong to last Parthian ruler or local prince²¹ of Sīstān, bears a long phrase in Parthian legends as <prnssn BRE 'twrssn> “Farn-Sāsān, son of Ādūr-Sāsān” on reverse and <BRE BRE tyrdty BRE npy s'nbry MLKYN MLKA> “grandson of Tīrdād, great-grandson of Sānabar, King of Kings” on obverse [Nikitin 1994; Alram 2007, 234] (Fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Farn-Sāsān's coin with Parthian legends [Nikitin 1994, 169]

13. **Māwak of Boḳārā:** some coins from a ruler named <m'wk> / Māwak²² of Boḳārā bear <MRAY m'wk> with Sogdian legends, in the late 4th to early 5th century AD (Fig. 16) and starting with his second successor i.e. <'sb'r> /Asbār/, changed to its Sogdian equivalent <xwβ> [Наймарк 1995, 31]²³.

²¹ The last Indo-Parthian king who minted in those reign was *Pakores*.

²² For the other previous reading see: [Наймарк 1995, 31].

²³ Thanks to Aleksandr Naymark for this information via www.academia.edu.



Fig. 16. Māwak's coin with Sogdian legends c. 4th–5th AD
[Наймарк 1995, 42]

14. **Kidārite Coins:** they ruled during 370–464 AD in Bactria and after a while from Soḡd to Balk & from Gandhāra & Uḍḍiyāna to Taxilā [Alram 2016, 35–43]²⁴. Their coinage was under the influence of other authorities so that they minted with various legends like Pahlavi, Brahmi and Bactrian. Their coins in Bactria have Bactrian legends while in Taxilā during 380–450 AD under the Guptās' and Kušāns' influence, they minted with Bactrian and Brahmi legends [Alram 2016, 55–61] but under their rule in Gandhāra & Uḍḍiyāna during 370–450 AD, they used a Sāsānid style for minting, so that some coins under Sāsānids' and Kušāns' influence, at least from two Kidārite rulers i.e. Wahrām ī Kušānšāh and Šāh Pērōz, respectively bear <kdy wlhl'n ZY kwš'n MLKA> (**Fig. 17**) and <M[LKA] pylw-cy> on obverse in Pahlavi legends and also Brahmi words in reverse [Alram 2016, 45–53].



Fig. 17. Wahrām ī Kušānšāh's coin with Pahlavi and Brahmi legends
c. 335–370 AD

²⁴ For more information about history and mentioning the Kidārites see: [Wan 2013].

15. **Nēzak-Šāhīs**: they ruled in Kāpisā nearby Kābul in Afghanistan during 580–670 AD, and used only a repeated title as <nyčky MLKA> in a kind of Pahlavi legends read as /Nēzak-šāh/ and finally defeated by Turk-Šāhīs [Grenet 2002; Grenet 2003, 217–218; Alam 2012]²⁵. The <nyčky MLKA> legends used by another rulers long after Nēzak-Šāhīs (**Fig. 18**).



Fig. 18. Nēzak's coin with Pahlavi legends c. 650 AD

16. **Turk-Šāhīs**: after Nēzak-šāhīs, they ruled during 660–750 AD in Kābulistān, Zābulistān & Gandhāra and minted their coins with Pahlavi, Bactrian & Sogdian legends; firstly they continued to mint with Nēzak-šāhī's Pahlavi inscriptions i.e. <nyčky MLKA>, but after a while some Bactrian inscriptions added; unread Sogdian legends found on their coins too [Alam 2016, 123–129] (**Fig. 19**).



Fig. 19. Nēzak's coin with Pahlavi legends c. 650 AD

17. **X^warāsān Tegīn Šāhs**: the second Turk-šāhī Dynasty rulers of Kābul who ruled during 680–740 AD in Kābulistān, Zābulistān, Balḵ & Gandhāra and minted their coins in Brahmi, Bactrian and Pahlavi

²⁵ For more information about their numismatics see: [Vondrovec 2010].

legends; the earliest coinage of these rulers are very similar to those of Nēzak-šāhī's, but after a while they minted in a style which is very similar to those of Sāsānid's and used more Middle Persian words on coins; although the influences of Arab's coinage on their coins is clear too [Alram 2016, 131–137]. A coin with reverse' inscription <tkyn' hwl's'n MLKA> “Tegin, King of Khorasan”, minted in Kābulistān and dated to year 77 post-Yazdgerd era, equivalent to 728 AD; its obverse has Bactrian and Brahmi inscriptions too [Alram 2016, 137] (Fig. 20).



Fig. 20. X^warāsān Tegīn Šāh's coin with Pahlavi, Bactrian & Brahmi legends c. 728 AD

18. **Kābul-Šāhīs:** they ruled in Zābulistān, Roḡḡaj, Kābulistān, Uḡḡiyāna & Taxilā and their coins bear Pahlavi, Brahmi & Bactrian legends [Alram 2016, 139–149]. Kābul-Šāhī rulers are not completely identified but it seems that after the invading Arabs into Afghanistan, X^warāsān Tegīn Šāh's brother, due to a succession conflict fled to Zābulistān and established his kingdom i.e. the so-called *rtbyl* kingdom in Arab historical literatures [Inaba 2017]. Some names that appeared on their coins are *Pangul*, *Spur*, *Sandan*, *From-Kesar*. Their coins are of various styles; a coin has <ybgu bhk'n MLKA> “Yabgu, the Bacrians' king”, another ones have Sāsānid's style and <GDE> like that of *From-Kesar* and a unique style belongs to *Spur* has long phrase in Pahlavi legends as <PWN ŠM Y yzdt' spwl bg hwtyp' n'm(?) hr'č mlt'n (MLKA)? / spwl hwtyp' - GDH 'pzwt'>.

Maybe the coin which dated to c. 721 AD whose obverse has <GDH 'pzwt> & <tkyn bg hwtyp hwl's'n MLKA> and its reverse written <tgy / TLYN / z'wlst[']n> “The royal splendor is increased! Tegīn, the Majestic Lord, King of X^warāsān, [minted in his] second

[regnal year in] Zābulistān”, belongs to another Kābul-Šāh [Harmatta, Litvinsky 1996, 377] (Fig. 21).



Fig. 21. An unknown Tegīn Šāh's coin with full Pahlavi legends c. 721 AD

19. **Espahbadān of Ṭabarestān:** they were from Sāsānid seed, resisted against Arab conquest and continued to coin in early Islamic era [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 209]²⁶. Almost all coins by Espahbodān bear <GDE> and in some cases <ŠNT> mentioned beside the year in Pahlavi legends (Fig. 22).



Fig. 22. Xʷaršēd's coin with Pahlavi legends c. 740–761 AD

20. **Arab rulers of Ṭabarestān:** after the last Espahbod in 144 A.H., appointed Arab rulers by ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate reigned on Ṭabarestān. Firstly they used the previous tradition for minting by Espahbodān and after a while started to mint with Kufīc beside Pahlavi legends [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 215] and such coins bear <GDE> on obverse (Fig. 23).

²⁶ See 4.4 *The Arab conquest of Ṭabarestān* of [Pourshariati 2016, 303–316].



Fig. 23. 'Umar b. al-'Alā's coin with Pahlavi and Arabic legends c. 775–785 AD

21. **Arab-Sāsānid:** after the Arab conquest on Pārs, the rulers decided to continue using the previous coins by Sāsānid rulers unchanged; after a while, they started to mint but in a style, which was very similar to Sāsānid style and bear Middle Persian words in Pahlavi legends. Arab-Sāsānid coins, mostly minted under the name of local governors than the main authority or Caliphate and for this reason, have a variety in their inscriptions and icons, even during the reign of same Caliph. On many typical forms of these coins, there are some ideograms in Pahlavi legends including: <GDE>, <Y>, <ŠNT>, <PWN>, <MNW> and also numbers like <TLYN> & <TM-WNA>; but some others have new phrases, mostly Pahlavi translation of Arabic creeds like that of 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir, Zubayrid ruler of Sīstān during 66–72 A.H., minted in 72 A.H. which bears <yzdt' I BRA OLE / AHRN yzdt' LOYT'> /yazad ēw bē oy any yazad nēst/ "There is one God, except He, there is no God."²⁷ (Fig. 24) beside another creed [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 31–32] or that of Qatārī b. al-Fujā'ah, the Kārijī leader minted in 75 A.H., in Ardašīr-Xwarrah, bears <LO[Y]T' d' twbl BRA yzdt'> /nēst dādwar bē yazad/ "There is no judge but God"²⁸ (Fig. 25) [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 31–32]²⁹.

²⁷ The well-known Arabic *Tahlīl* creed i.e. *lā ilāha illā –llāh*.

²⁸ The second part of Arabic *taḥkīm* creed i.e. *lā ḥukma illā lillāh wa-lā ḥakama illā Allāh*.

²⁹ Thanks to Kiāraš Ğōlāmī & Mustafā Kan'ānī for their advices about such coins.



Fig. 24. Reverse of 'Abd al-'Azīz's coin c. 72 A.H. [Mochiri 1981]



Fig. 25. Obverse of Qatārī b. al-Fujā'ah's coin c. 75 A.H.

A rare coin with <PWN ŠM ZY yzdt'> /pad nām ī yazd/³⁰ “in the name of god”³¹ (cf. plural form yazdān in Zoroastrian texts) from Susa is also noteworthy [Gyselen 2008, 121–122]. Some rare coins have phrases in sense of prayer, using ideogramic verbs like <YHMTN OL> /rasēd ō/ [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 36], <YHWWN-'t> /bawād/ [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 75]. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, the Umayyad Caliph, finished using Pahlavi legends and Iconism in coins as long as Byzantine elements and from this period a new Islamic style was introduced [Daryae 2016, 79; Gyselen 1984, 693].

22. **Arab-Ārmenid:** some drachms minted in Armenia in Islamic era which bear <GDE> on obverse and <ZWZN> on reverse instead of Mint's name as in some cases have <ŠRM> /drōd/ [Rezaei bagh bidi 2014, 72–73, 77] (Fig. 26).



Fig. 26. Husraw's coin with Pahlavi and Arabic legends c. 694–697 AD

³⁰ It seems Mochiri and aftermath Gignoux, Gyselen and Rezaei Bagh-Bidi and others, do not so true do this reading firstly.

³¹ The well-known Arabic *Basmala* creed i.e. *bismi -llāh*.

23. **Čāč coins of 7th – 8th cc. AD:** unknown rulers of Čāč³² whose coins bear various inscriptions which have <ZNH> and maybe <MRAY> [Lurje 2010, 369] as ideogram in Sogdian legends including: <ZNH pny tkyn č'čynk γwβ> (Fig. 27) [Kamoliddin, Babayar 2008, 74], <ZNH pny zpγw kr crδnk> [Lurje 2010, 471–472; N.1561] and ZNH pny zpγw krnw(?) crδnk [Babayar 2013, 332, 340].



Fig. 27. Čāč's coin with Sogdian legends c. 8th AD

24. **Amoygan or Gamaukyān³³ of Panč:** An Afšīn who ruled during second half of 7th c. (~ 694 AD) in Panjikant and his coin bears <pncy MRAY γ'm'wky'n> in Sogdian legends [Лившиц 1977, 117] (Fig. 28).



Fig. 28. Čamūkyān's coin with Sogdian legends c. 694 AD
[Смирнова 1963, 91]

³² Kamoliddin & Babayar believe that Čāč coins of this period (the last quarter of the 6th – middle of the 8th centuries) have not MRAY title on them and they emended the previous readings by Rtveldaze and Livshits [Kamoliddin, Babayar 2008, 80].

³³ Čamūkyān [Lurje 2010, 162; N.372].

25. **Čekin Čur Bilgä³⁴ of Panč:** An Afšīn, Turkic ruler of Panč³⁵ whose coin has Sogdian legends as <Ꞇncy MRAY βyδk'' xwβ>³⁶ / Pančē xutāw Bilgä xuv/ “The sovereign of Panč, prince Bilgä” [Livshits 2015, 37; Lurje 2010, 161; N.370]. He reigned in the end of 7th to beginning of 8th cc. (~ 694–708 AD) and his name was mentioned in the Sogdian Mug documents too³⁷ [Лившиц 1977, 117; Stark 2008, 232–236] (Fig. 29).



Fig. 29. Čekin Čur Bilgä's coin with Sogdian legends c. 6st–7rd AD
[Смирнова 1981, 256]

26. **Afšīns of Ošrūsana:** they ruled Osrušana/Ošrūsana in circa 7th century whose at least three names on inscribed coins with Sogdian legends found in Panjikant with MRAY including [Fedorov 2003; Gritsina, Mamadjanova, Mukimov 2014]: I. <ꞆꞆ' nč MRAY> “Raxānič Afšīn” (Fig. 30), II. <stčry MRAY> “Sattačar/Satučik Afšīn”, and III. <črδmyš MRAY> “Čirθmiš Afšīn” [Lurje 2010, I, 335; N.1041; II, 352–353; N.1103–1104; III, 165; N.383].



Fig. 30. Raxānič Afšīn's (?) coin with Sogdian legends c. 6st–7rd AD

³⁴ For his name see: [Lurje 2010, 161; N.370].

³⁵ A district where Panjikant was main settlement of it.

³⁶ Already read by Livshits as <Ꞇncy MRY' βylk'' γwβ> [Лившиц 1977, 117].

³⁷ СДГМ II, 47 : βꞆtyk MLKA Ꞇncy MR'Y ck'yn cwr βylk'' ans as B-8 in [Livshits 2015, 37–44].

27. **Chorasmian Afrīgs:** rulers of K̄vārazm during 305 to 995 AD who minted in Chorasmian legends. Two group of Chorasmian coins (B & C) bear Aramaic legends; Group B dated to the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd centuries AD, have name of ruler + MLKA and Group C dated to the 6th century, have name of ruler + MRAY MLKA [Vainberg 2005]. Rulers of group B (name + MLKA) are *wrtrmwš*, *wzm'r*, *bywrsr*, *s'nβry*, *twtyxs*, *r'st*, *sy'wspwrš* and rulers of group C (MRAY MLKA + name) are *prwyk*, *šr'm*, *k'nyk*, *wzk'nšw'r*, *xwsrw*, *sy'wršprn* (**Fig. 31**), *wzk'nšw'r* [Вайнберг 1977].



Fig. 31. Sāwašfan's coin with Chorasmian legends c. 751 AD

28. **Sogdian Əxšēds:** Iranian rulers of Soğd and Farğāna during the pre-Islamic and early Islamic period whose capital was Samarqand. Their coins are in Chinese, Arabic and Sogdian; the Sogdian ones have the MLKA /əxšēd/ in Sogdian legends [Смирнова 1963, 173; Табл. XXI; Лившиц 2008, 198–200; Zeimal 1983, 256]. Some known Sogdian əxšēds are <šyšpyr MLKA> /šēšpēr xšēd/, <(')βrγwm'n MLKA> /(')warxumān xšēd/ (**Fig. 32**), <'wrk wrtrmwk MLKA> /Urk Wartramuk xšēd/, <twk'sp'δk MLKA> /Tōkəspādak xšēd/ or /Tōkəspādē xšēd/, <m'stn-n'wy'n MLKA> or <m'stc'wnš MLKA> /Mastič Unaš xšēd/, <trγwn MLKA> /Tarxūn xšēd/, <'wyrk MLKA> /Uyrak xšēd/, <twry'r MLKA> /Turγar xšēd/, <MLKA twrk> /xšēd Turak/.



Fig. 32. (ə)warxumān xšēd's coin with Sogdian legends
[Смирнова 1963, 68]

29. **Otrār coins of 7th – 8th AD:** some coins from Otrār (the early Islamic Fārāb in modern day Kazakhstan) with Sogdian legends and someone without inscriptions; the first type with Sogdian legends probably dated to 7th – 8th cc. AD, recently read as <ZN(H) 'wk/n (β) γ(')n 'nwt>, belongs to <'δpw x'γ'n twtwx> /Alp Qāqān Tutuḵ/ [Бабаяров, Кубатин 2014, 98] (**Fig. 33**).



Fig. 33. Alp Qāqān Tutuḵ's coin with Sogdian legends c. 7th – 8th cc. AD

30. **Āxurpat of Keš:** some coins belong to <'xwrpt> /Āxwarpat/ or /Āxurpat/, <ρβ'n'k γωβ> “Rayfān's ruler”, found in Keš (modern day šahr-e sabz in Uzbekistan), from 8th century AD, which represent late Sāsānid coinage' influence and one has the rudiment of <GDE 'pzwt'> in Pahlavi legends beside some Sogdian inscriptions [Наймарк 2011, 13; Наймарк 2004]³⁸ (**Fig. 34**).



Fig. 34. Āxurpat's coin with Sogdian legends c. 8th c. AD
[Смирнова 1981, 306]³⁹

³⁸ For more information about Āxurpat see: [Stark 2009, 45–48; N.146].

³⁹ Note: Smirnova has not pointed to Pahlavi legends.

31. **Turco-Sogdian of Farḡāna:** such coins bear <pn̄y βγγ x'ttwn MRAY> “The coin of the Divine Ḳātūn (and) the Ruler” in Sogdian legends (**Fig. 35**) which previously was read as <MRWY βčs' [γ'ttwn] h> by Smirnova and <MRAY pywc γ't/twnh> by Akhunbabaev [Бабаяров, Кубатин 2013, 79–80]. The Turkic name of Ūš, a well-known city in Farḡāna Valley has read beside the Sogdian legends [Fedorov 2003, 9].



Fig. 35. A Turco-Sogdian coin of Farḡāna with Sogdian legends

32. **Būyids dynasty:** Rokn-al-dawla Ḥasan b. Būya, a Daylamite origin amir of Būyids dynasty in Rayy (al-Muḥammadiyya) who ruled during circa 935 to 976 AD and minted in Arabic besides a rare coin type which represents Sāsānid influence and bear <MLKA'n MLKA>/šāhān šāh/ and <GDE 'pzw't'> /xwarrah abzūd/ in Pahlavi legends on the obverse [Miles 1964, 283–285] (**Fig. 36**).



Fig. 36. Rokn-al-dawla's coin with Arabic and Pahlavi legends

Unconvincing information

Unfortunately despite of some references to following coins, I could not find some photography as evidence as well as my personal experience about validity of such ideas was not enough; but I mention these coins here for some reasons:

33. **Vakš valley coins:** these types of coins bear <wzwrk MLKA 'ršk> in Sogdian legends and in some cases with Bactrian legends or uninscribed [Fedorov 2003, 14].

34. **Qobādiān oasis coins:** these coins have found in some reigns like Qobādiān oasis, Ajina Tepe and Kāfer Qal'a and according to some scholars bear cursive Hephthalite-Bactrian legends inscribed <wzrk MLKA> [Fedorov 2003, 14–15].

Table 1

	Authority	Period	Ideogram
1	Arsacid	247 BC – 224 AD	MLKA
2	Fratarkās	230 BC – 210 AD	ALHYA, BRE, MLKA, ZY
3	Artašēsīd	189 BC – 12 AD	MLKA
4	Elymais	147 BC – 224 AD	BRE, MLKA
5	Characene	127 BC – 222 AD	MLKA
6	Aršākiani or Aršākuni		MLKA
7	Gondopharid	20 BC – 1 AD	BRE, MLKA, MLKAn MLKA, MLKYN MLKA
8	Naḵšābid	1 st –3 rd AD	MRAY
9	Sāsānid	224 AD – 652 AD	BRE, GDE, MLKA, MLKAn MLKA, MLKAn MLKTA, NWRA, MN, MNW, ORHYA, W, ZY
10	Indo-Sāsānid (Kušanšāhs)	280 AD – 460 AD	MLKA, MLKAn MLKA, RBA
11	Euthydemus I (imi.)	2 nd – 4 th cc. AD	MRAY
12	Indo-Parthian	350 AD	BRE, BRE BRE, MLKYN MLKA
13	Māwak	4 th – 5 th	MRAY
14	Kidārite	370 AD – 464 AD	MLKA, ZY
15	Nēzak-Šāhīs	580 AD – 670 AD	MLKA
16	Turk-Šāhīs	660 AD – 750 AD	MLKA
17	X ^w arāsān Tegīn Šāhs	680 AD – 740 AD	MLKA
18	Kābul-Šāhīs	7 th – 8 th AD	GDE, MLKA

19	Espahbadān of Ṭabarestān	7 th – 8 th AD	GDE, ŠNT
20	Arab rulers of Ṭabarestān	7 th AD	GDE
21	Arab-Sāsānid	7 th AD	AHRN, BRA, GDE, LOYT', MNW, OL, OLE, PWN, ŠM, ŠNT, TLYN, TMWNA, Y, YHMTN YHWWN-'t, ZY
22	Arab-Ārmenid	7 th AD	GDE, ŠRM, ZWZŪN
23	Čāč	7 th – 8 th AD	MRAY, ZNH
24	Amoygan or Gamaukyan	7 th AD	MRAY
25	Čekin Čur Bilgä	7 th – 8 th AD	MRAY
26	Afšīns of Ošrūsana	7 th AD	MRAY
27	Chorasmian Afrīgs	305 AD – 995 AD	MRAY MLKA, MLKA
28	Sogdian Əxšēds		MLKA
29	Otrār	7 th – 8 th AD	ZN(H)
30	Āxurpat of Keš	8 th AD	GDE
31	Turco-Sogdian of Farġāna		MRAY
32	Būyids dynasty	9 th – 10 th AD	GDE, MLKA'n MLKA
33	Vaқš		MLKA
34	Qobādiān		MLKA

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І. Шафії

**АРАМЕЙСЬКІ СЛІДИ НА МОНЕТАХ
ІРАНСЬКОГО СВІТУ**

Арамейська мова (мови) в її чотирьох фазах з різними написами на різних матеріалах була знайдена в Ірані (в основному в західній частині країни, де проживали арамейські громади). Сліди арамейської мови в іранському світі збереглися у великій різноманітності на монетах. Крім низки царств, чії монети несли арамейські фрази, деякі інші просто карбувалися з арамейською легендами і/або використовували ідеограми на своїх монетах. Фактично з III ст. до н. е. і до X ст. н. е. арамейські слова з арамейськими, пехлевійськими, парфянськими, согдійськими та хораськими легендами використовувалися як ідеограми в карбуванні. Через використання ідеограм неможливо прочитати оригінальну вимову слів, втім цей спадок може ввести концепцію більшої арамейської присутності в іранському світі.

Найбільш ранній тип ідеограм можна знайти на монетах карбування Фраттарки у провінції Парс приблизно з III ст. до н. е., а остання належить бвідському еміру X ст. Рукн аль-Даулу, який правив у Райї (аль-Мухаммадія). Протягом цього періоду, близько 1300 років, деякі династії чеканили свої власні монети з ідеограмами на великій території від Близького Сходу до Трансоксанії, а інші використовували ці монети у своїх регулярних угодах як грошові кошти.

<MLKA> “цар”, <GDE> “пишність” і <BRE> “син” використовуються частіше, ніж інші слова. Використання арамейських ідеограм на арабосасанідських монетах має найбільшу різноманітність, і, згідно з написами на цих монетах, вони включали найрізноманітніші слова та фрази, в основному перекладені з арабської на пехлеві.

Ключові слова: Стародавній Іран, іранський світ, нумізMATика, арамейська мова, ідеограми

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**АРАМЕЙСЬКІ СЛІДИ НА МОНЕТАХ
ІРАНСЬКОГО СВІТУ**

Арамейський язык (язики) в его чотирьох фазах с различными надписями на разных материалах был найден в Иране (в основном в западной части страны, где проживали арамейские общины). Следы арамейского языка в иранском мире сохранились в большом разнообразии на монетах. Помимо ряда царств, чьи монеты несли арамейские фразы, некоторые другие просто чеканились с арамейскими легендами и/или использовали идеограммы на своих монетах. Фактически с III в. до н. э. и до X в. н. э. арамейские слова с арамейскими, пехлевийскими, парфянскими, согдийскими и хорасскими легендами использовались в качестве

идеограмм в чеканке. Из-за использования идеограмм невозможно прочитать оригинальное произношение слов, но это наследие может ввести концепцию большего арамейского присутствия в иранском мире.

Самый ранний тип идеограмм можно найти на монетах чеканки Фраттарки в провинции Парс примерно с III в. до н. э., а последняя принадлежит буидскому эмиру X в. Рукну аль-Даулу, который правил в Райи (аль-Мухаммадия). В течение этого периода, около 1300 лет, некоторые династии чеканили свои собственные монеты с идеограммами на большой территории от Ближнего Востока до Трансоксании, а другие использовали эти монеты в своих регулярных сделках в качестве денежного средства.

<MLKA> “царь”, <GDE> “великолепие” и <BRE> “сын” используются чаще, чем другие слова. Использование арамейских идеограмм на арабо-сасанидских монетах имеет наибольшее разнообразие, и, согласно надписям на этих монетах, они включали самые разные слова и фразы, в основном переведенные с арабского на пехлеви.

Ключевые слова: Древний Иран, иранский мир, нумизматика, арамейский язык, идеограммы

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