

QOBAD I (CE 488-497) First rule
ZAMASP (CE 497-499)
QOBAD I (CE 499-531) Second rule
Sons of Piruz I

(Silver Drachm)



Coin of Qobad I: Obverse: *'KaVaTU AFZUI'* (*Kavad/Qobad the bestower of prosperity*). Tiara bears three turrets (one on each side and one at the back) and 2 layers of pearls and a Crescent in front. A clip of 3 gemstones holds rear of tiara. The Cap of Crown (not of silk but probably of a much stiffer material like *papiere mache* of the modern '*Feto*') is high. Star alone is in front and back of Crown. Star + Crescent motif is on shoulders and Crescent alone above shoulders (This is a symbolic way of whatever is embroidered into the Cape resting on the shoulders). Pendant of pearl necklace and Earrings bear 3 large gemstones. Crescents (without stars) outside the Rim appear for the first time.

Reverse: The Fire attendants are shown facing forwards their hands resting on swords in front. The decorative ribbons of the Altar Shaft are turned upwards. It is interesting to note that the Drachm coins of all subsequent rulers show these Altar Shaft ribbons turned upwards except the coin of Ardashir III. **Mint** is '*NIH*' (*Nihavand*). **Regnal Year** is '*IaCh-DAH*' (*Year 11*). Qobad I's

regnal date on coins first appeared in CE 499-**Year 11** (*IaCh-DAH*) and ended in CE 531-**Year 43** (*SiCh-CheHeL*) during his second reign. **All subsequent coins of the Dynasty have the Regnal years of the ruler printed.**

(Silver Drachm)



[**Coin of Zamasp:** (Courtesy of British Museum coin)

Obverse: 'ZaM' behind the crown. King faces bust of son, respectfully offering him the wreath of victory/power held with both hands. Scalloped Tiara has two turret (one front and back). Crescent clip in middle holds Orymbos. Curled shoulder length hair and short-trimmed beard. The Pendant of pearl necklace and the earrings have circular gemstone. Pearl-hemmed border of Cape is open in front.

Reverse: Cape falling behind shoulders is short. Star is to left and crescent to right of Fire. Attendants are priests facing Fire with raised hands in reverence.

Mint is 'AAM' (*Aamol*). **Regnal year** is 'AIOKI' (*One*)]

Administration:

Since Qobad was inclined to be favoring **Mazdak, the heretic**, who had founded a new doctrine based on his own interpretation of

the Avesta, the Council of Nobles and the Mobeds, at first hesitated, but ultimately, selected him with considerable trepidation. Their doubts were soon confirmed after Qobad came to power. He assisted Mazdak, who preached that all men were, by God's providence, born equal and that no one was brought into this world with any property to possess more than another. A fairly proportionate sharing of all good material possessions must, therefore be done. This was **the first documented concept of Socialism**. Further, since all life was sacred it was necessary to abstain from animal food, milk and eggs. Thousands became converted to his doctrine.

In **CE 497**, when Qobad himself took the oath of conversion, anarchy prevailed among the followers. As the Mazdakites grew bolder they began to plunder land and property for distribution to their supporters.

The Council of nobles, fearing more unrest, promptly deposed Qobad and put his brother, **Zamasp**, on the throne.

Qobad was not put to death but confined to a prison, the Castle of Oblivion, where he languished until his wife helped him escape. He was carried away, after a visit from his wife, wrapped in her bedding. Qobad fled to *the Hephthalites*. The Chief, Khush Nawaz gave him refuge and two years later, with a large hoard of Hephthalites laid siege to Ctesiphon. Zamasp vacated the throne peacefully and reinstated Qobad on the throne.

Campaigns:

***CE 503-505**: His first Campaign against the **Romans** brought the 50 years peace, which was signed by Yazdegard II and Theodosius II in CE 440, to an end. It was precipitated by **Anastasius I (CE 491-518)** building a new **City called Dara** near Nisibis at the edge of the Mesopotamian plateau, in direct violation of the treaty. Anastasius also refused to pay for the defense of the **Caspian Port of Darband**, the main entry point by sea of the Huns and their easy access through the **Mountain Passes** in the Caucasus. Qobad

retaliated by invading Mesopotamia and conquering **Nisibis**, an important source of commercial revenue.

***CE 503-505**: Since he found it impossible to pay the reward to Khush Nawaz in gold he angered *the Hephthalites*, who invaded Khorasan.

***CE 505-515**: Another menace, which loomed on the borders, east of the Caspian Sea, was that of *the Khazars*. They were a race of fierce warriors, nomadic, ruthless cruel and adept on horseback. **Their place of origin was the arid steppe country between the Rivers Volga and Don**, from where their army of 100,000 men made organized raids via the Caucasus Mountains into the fertile plains, initially of *Gurgan (Roman Iberia)*, *Ardan (Roman Albania)* and *Northern Armenia*. After each raid, they returned home with a substantial booty. Later, during the Sassanian rule (as we will see) they ventured further south, too. To check their incursions Qobad had a *frontier town, Amid* built on the northernmost border of Armenia. It took Qobad 10 years of campaigning to drive the Khazars out and curtail their invasions.

***CE 514**: In Rome, an unusual occurrence was noted. In order to promote the cause of Christianity in the Eastern provinces of Rome - Syria, Iberia (Gurgan), Ardan (Albania), Armenia and Mesopotamia, the Council of Archbishops in Rome elected, *as the Pope*, the Syrian Archbishop by the name of *Hormisdas (Hormazd)* **CE 514-523**.

***CE 523**: To help appease the Feudal Lords and the Council of Mobeds, he declared that Mazdak was definitely dangerous to society and had him executed. More than 100,000 of his followers were persecuted.

***CE 524-531**: His second Campaign against the Romans was instigated by **Justin I CE 518-527**, who hoped to recover **Nisibis** but failed.

***CE 528**: His successor, **Justinian I (CE 527-565)** invaded, captured the fortress of Dara but failed to conquer **Nisibis**. The Commander, Piruz Mirhan ultimately succeeded in driving the Romans back to Antioch.

Legacy of his administration:

Qobad ruled for 41 years. He was remembered for his beneficent reforms. His second reign was noted for the building of bridges, roads, irrigation canals and towns. He would have supported his son, Khusru in enticing the leaders of the Mazdakite movement out of their Castle to attend a 'policy conference' and then massacre them. Mazdak himself died in a subsequent clash. The vital reforms of an organized system of taxation were to, later, help his chosen son, Khusru I, to implement.

Qobad developed a stroke on 8 Sept 531 and died 13 Sept 531 **at age 82. He was the oldest ruling Sassanian King.** On his death bed he summoned his family, the nobles and the mobeds and in their presence he placed the crown on the head of his **3rd son, Khusru**, bypassing the eldest son, Kaus, the 2nd son Zamasp and the 4th son, Xerxes.



Anastasius CE 491-518



Justin I CE 518-527



Justinian I CE 527-565

**KHUSRU I (CE 531-579) 3rd son of Qobad I
(*Anoushiravan e Adil -
The immortal and the just*)**

(Silver Drachm)



Obverse: '(K)HUSRUI AFZUI' (*Khusru, the bestower of prosperity*). Tiara bears 2 layers of pearls, three turrets (one on each side and one at the back) and a Crescent in front. Jewel Clip holds tiara. Stiff Crown cap is very high. Star is in front of and behind Crown. Crescent clip holds Orymbos. Crescent is over both shoulders. 3 Crescents without Stars are outside the Rim.

Reverse: Fire Altar has a narrow shaft with Ribbons upturned (ribbons remain upturned in coins of subsequent rulers, except Ardashir III). Crescent to left and Star to right of Fire. Attendants are King and Prince facing forwards, both their hands resting on sword halter in front. **Mint** 'AI' (*Airan Khurra Shahpur*). **Regnal Year 1** (AIOKI)

Administration: He arranged for: -

*The **organization of the Empire** into four convenient Governing Zones, each governed by a King who was responsible for an audit

each year. The *Eastern Satrapy* comprised of, from north to south, Khorasan, Karman and Siestan, the *Western Satrapy* of Mesopotamia, Babylonia and Syria, the *Northern Satrapy* of Armenia, Atrapatan and Ghilan and the *Southern Satrapy* of Pars and Khuzistan.

*A graded tax levied, only after proper assessment of the crop each year.

*A land tax on building properties comprising large estates.

*Establishment of a welfare State with construction of roads, bridges, canals, embankments. The safety of highways for travelers and guarantee of courier mail. The *reclaiming of wasteland and lands owned by the Mazdakites*, which was distributed to the deserving peasants.

*A regular standing army with a graded pay according to position

***CE 550:** The establishment of the University of Shahpurgard (at Gondeshahpur) with Aramaic as the medium of teaching. Encouraged and financed *Dehgan Daneshwar* to write the History of Airan (Khudai Nameh), which was later used by Daikiki and Firdawzi to compose the Shah Nameh. Had the works of **Plato**, **Aristotles** and other Philosophers translated into Pahlavi. This led to **the origins of Sufism**, which was to take deep root later, during the Islamic period. The Avestan Scriptures were rewritten with revisions and re-explanations in Pazend.

*Recognition of the game of Nard (Backgammon) as a worthy invention and the import of *Satranj (Chess)* from India. The French took Chess to Europe. Encouraged the game of Polo, which was open to both genders.

*Building of the famous Palace with a large Audience Hall in Ctesiphon (the Arch of the Hall is still present at *Taq e Kesra*, near Baghdad). It had the famous *Spring Carpet of Khusru*, woven with knotted silk threads of exquisite color and reinforced by gold and silver wires. Like a tapestry, it showed the beauty of the gardens of Airan with their decorative flora and fauna, the colors being highlighted by precious and semiprecious stones.

*Cultivation of Silkworms in organized farms to produce Silk.

Campaigns:

His greatest strength lay in the fact that he could pre-empt every move of the enemy and act decisively, thus forcing them into Peace Treaties entirely favorable to Airan. He forbade the pillaging of captured Cities, which he used as barter in subsequent Treaties. Let us examine how he secured advantages by his decisive, timed and strategic use of force.

***CE 533:** He *forced Rome into a treaty* by refusing to guard against the incursion of the Huns via the Black Seaport of Darband and through the Mountain Passes of the Caucasus, obliging the Romans to contribute 11,000 pounds of gold to the upkeep and defense of the Port and the Passes against invasion by the Huns.

***CE 540:** Realizing that this had given the Romans an opportunity to increase their campaigns in Africa, only to return in strength later, Khusru made the first move. He *struck at the heart of Antioch, their Capital and captured it.* To withdraw from Antioch he extracted 5000 pounds of gold as indemnity against further war. While returning from Antioch, he laid siege to the Roman Cities of *Apameia, Carrhea, Edessa and Dara* in Mesopotamia and under subjugation, forced them into in the **Treaty of Edessa**, which levied an annual tribute upon the 4 cities.

***CE 550:** He laid siege to and conquered **the major City of Lazica (Colchis, East of the Black Sea)**, in order to ensure the peace with Rome becomes more lasting. He left a standing army to control and rule Lazica.

***CE 551:** He laid siege to the second largest *City of Petra* on the Black Sea and extracted 2000 pounds of Gold to withdraw the siege.

***CE 562:** Subsequently, the Romans pleaded for a **second Treaty** so that they could regain **control of Lazica.** The terms were 30,000 pieces of gold annually to withdraw Khusru's troops from Lazica and to annul any likelihood of subsequent claims to Lazica (Colchis).

***CE Dec 569/Jan 570:** When **Justin II (CE 567-578)** tried to enter Airan through the back door via Abyssinia (along the Straits

of the present Erytria) Khusru allowed the Byzantine army to struggle through the desert sands to reach northern Arabiya, where his army was ready and waiting. He decimated the fatigued army. He then entered Abyssinia to capture the Roman legions and left a border patrol to guard both sides of the Straits. He, thus, successfully blocked the entry of Christianity. But, as history records, a baby boy was born at the same time in the Arabian Desert, *the Prophet Muhammad*.

***CE 570:** He built a new City, *Rumiyeh Zi Khusrui* for the repatriation of the Roman captives, who were allowed to settle with Iranian wives while enjoying the status of free citizens.

***CE 572:** The Khazar raids continued in spite of the building of the *Fortress of Amida* by Qobad. When the Romans under **Justin II CE 565-578** tried to recreate problems in Armenia by instigating the *Khazars* to invade Armenia. Khusru dealt with the invasion firmly and also retaliated by re-conquering Antioch. Justin II was so exasperated by the disastrous fall of the Capital he abdicated in favor of **Tiberius II CE 578-582**.

*In the East he totally *eliminated the Hephthalites* by putting one of their own kind against them. First, he entered into a treaty of mutual co-operation with the 3rd Khakan **Mokan Khan** of Turkemenia (lying north of the Oxus). **Khusru married his daughter, Kayen, who was the mother of his successor, Hormazd IV**. The combined armies defeated the Hephthalites, slew the Chief and eradicated their roots totally. Remnants of the Hephthalites escaped to Sindh and spread all over the Subcontinent, where they took over as the *Koknashta Brahmins*, exhibiting the same domineering attitude in the newly found land.

*He also had a *Christian wife, Euphemia*, whom he granted freedom to follow her own religion provided she did not influence anyone in Court. Her son, **Nushzad, CE 551**, however, defiantly embraced Christianity. He broke into the treasury and defected to the Romans. Then, with an army of Roman mercenaries he laid claim to the throne. Khusru sent Commander Ram Burzin to capture him but Nushzad died in battle.

Khusru I, *the immortal and the just King* died peacefully, in CE 579.



Justinian I CE 527-565



Justin II CE 567-578



Tiberius II CE 578-582

