

**KHUSRU II (CE 27th June 590 - 29th Feb 627)
son of Hormazd IV**

(Silver Drachm)



Obverse: 'KHUSRUI AFZUN' (*Khusru, the bestower of prosperity*). Tiara, bearing 2 layers of pearls, has 3 turrets - a small one on each side and one at the back with a Crescent in front. At the back the Tiara is held in place by a clip of 3 gemstones. There are 3 gemstones in the Earrings and in the Pendant. A Star and Crescent motif top an enormous pair of wings. Star and Crescent on each shoulder and Crescent over Left shoulder. There are 2 Rims. The Crown of pure gold was so heavy (about 200 lbs.) it was suspended by golden chains from the ceiling of the throne room.

Reverse: Thin double-conical Altar shaft with upturned Ribbons tied to the middle. Star to left and crescent to right of Fire. Attendants are priests facing forwards with hands resting on sword. There are 3 Rims.

Mint is 'AI' (*Airan Khurra Shahpur*). **Regnal year** is 'SIJ-VISHT' (*Twenty-three*). From Regnal Year 11 the word 'AFID' - '*praise*' appears outside the rim.



Gold Denar of Khusru II: (Courtesy of the British Museum)

Gold coins were minted essentially as a matter of prestige and of paying homage to Hakhamani tradition. They were almost always minted as festive issues.

Obverse: Legend on the top from right to left - '*KhUSRUI MaLKaN MaLKA*' (*Khusru King of Kings*). On the left from below upwards - '*HaRaMaN AFZUTaN*' (*bringer of prosperity*). Massive Crown of Gold has tiara of two rows of pearls and bearing two turrets (one front and back) and two large wings and a crescent clip holding the Orymbos. Ribbons hold tiara and curly locks of hair at the back. Pendant of pearl necklace and earrings bear three large jewels. The border of the Cape is hemmed with a double layer of pearls and is open in front.

Reverse: Legend '*AIRAN AFZUTAN ITI*' (*May he maintain Iran in prosperity*) ?Bust of divinity or of possibly of the King himself the obverse image facing forwards.

Campaigns:

CE 591-602: For 11 years Khusru, grateful to Maurice Tiberius for helping him regain his rightful throne, kept extremely cordial relations with Rome.

CE 602: But when the cruel Byzantine Centurion, **Phocas** (CE Nov 602-610) assassinated Maurice Tiberius and his sons and usurped the throne, Khusru declared war against Rome. He ordered Narseh, the Iranian Commander in *Edessa*, to defy the orders of the Roman Commander, Germanus and hold on to his Fortress.

CE 603-605: With a large army Khusru, then, laid siege to *Dara* for nine months, at the end of which it surrendered. Then followed the Roman Fortresses of *Dara* and *Amid*.

CE 607: Khusru joined by Narseh, then, pressed forwards along the Euphrates and crossed into Syria, capturing Harran and Edessa.

CE 609: Advancing into Roman *Cappadoccia*, they systematically conquered *Hierapolis*, *Aleppo* and all towns till they reached *Caesaria*, the chief Roman stronghold. The whole of Cappadocia as far as *Constantinople* was in sight. Phocas was unable to handle Khusru's relentless advance.

CE 610: Heraclius (CE 610-641), the Roman Commander in Africa, taking advantage of Phocas' weakness, advanced to Constantinople and captured Constantinople unopposed. Phocas was assassinated.

CE 610: The Battle of Dhu-Qar. The Prophet Muhammad had just begun his career. Under his guidance the backward Arab tribes were beginning to become organized and boisterous in the semi-autonomous State of *Hira [Herat* (the region around modern *Kuwait*)]. From here, under '*al Mondhir*' in CE 420, a large tribal army of Arabs had helped Varahran V lay siege to Ctesiphon to gain his rightful throne. The Arab Chief of the tribe of Noman had asked for the hand of one of Khusru's daughters. The refusal infuriated Noman, who gathered a huge Arab hoard from *the tribes of Noman and Shaybani* and completely routed Khusru's organized army of 40,000, harrying the retreating army and killing, so that they would have no chance of returning. The Iranians may have easily waived this incidence, *the Battle of Dhu Qar*, as minor but **the Arabs would have realized that they may have underestimated themselves in the past and that the Iranians were, after all, not invincible.**

CE 611-614: Shahrbaraz, Khusru's Commander on a second front along another route conquered took *Apamiea* and *Antioch*. Then captured *Damascus*, advancing further south to *Palestine*. The Jews, summoned by Shahrbaraz, declared a holy war against the 'mis-believers' and occupied the regions around the Jordan River and the Sea of Gallilee, once *Jerusalem* fell. They went on a rampage, destroying the Churches of St. Helena, of Constantine, of the Holy Sepulchre, of the Resurrection and other holy places and massacred 17,000 Christian inhabitants. 35,000 were made prisoners, including the aged Zacharias, who was taken captive to Ctesiphon. The 'True Cross' was transported to Ctesiphon, where it was duly cared for and venerated by Khusru's Christian wife, Shireen.

CE 616: With the help of his Commander, Shahrbaraz he **captured Egypt capturing the Roman garrisons from Alexandria**. Then, traveling along

the Nile Valley he occupied the **whole of Ethiopia**. One of his coins, minted in the captured Alexandria [see Photo under], shows him wearing a Roman Crown with a cross.



Plaster cast of an equivalent Byzantine style coin minted in Alexandria after the capture of Egypt - 12 Numia showing on the **Obverse side** the replacement of the Roman Emperor Maurice Tiberius's bust with that of Khusru II with a cross atop the helmet crown. Star on Left and Crescent on right of the bust was added. There is no legend.

Reverse: Mint monogram '*Alex*' for Alexandria.

CE 617: With the help of Commander *Shahen*, he **captured Calchedon**, situated opposite Constantinople. The Roman Empire was reduced merely to Constantinople, surrounding areas and fragments of Italy and Greece. Heraclius panicked and tried to flee to Carthage in Africa but was prevented from sailing away with his personal wealth. The Sassanian Empire had now reached the same zenith, twice before reached by the Hakhamani Empire.

***CE 622:** During the *Prophet Muhammad's flight to Medina (Year 1 of the Hezira)*, a disgruntled Iranian called *Beghzad* defected and joined the Prophet. He, subsequently, acted as the advisor on Iranian affairs. The Prophet called him '*Salman e Fars*' (the wise man of Pars) and '*Dinyar*' (friend of the Faith), because it was through his efforts that many of the Zarthushtrian traditions were passed on to Islam.

***CE 623:** Heraclius vowed to fight back. Determined, he sailed with a large fleet and landed at Issus on the Black Sea. In the battle that ensued he defeated the Commander, **Shahrbarz** to gain some initial ground.

***CE 624-625:** Having concluded **an alliance with the Khan Zeibel of the Khazars**, Heraclius advanced by way of the Black Sea, crossed the Araxes

River and conquered Armenia. He conquered *Gurgan (Iberia)* and *Ardan (Albania)*, spending the winter there. By the summer of CE 625 he had recaptured all Roman territory lost in the north. Khusru, however, still held Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt.

***CE 627:** With the help of 40,000 Khazars on horseback Heraclius started from Lazica to conquer Airan. He passed through *Syria* and *Azerbaijan* unmolested, crossed the *Zagros Mountains* and entered *Mesopotamia*. In Battle of Nineveh on 12 December 627 the Iranian army was routed and their most astute Commanders were lost. Heraclius crossed the Zab River to enter Mesopotamia. Khusru recalled Shahrbaraz from Calchedon but Heraclius had almost reached Dastagard, which was Khusru's capital.

***CE 627:** To add to his problems, Khusru was being plotted against in his own court. With the help of Roman infiltrators *Shireen, the Christian wife* of Khusru, in spite of advanced age, had remained in complete command. She, now, plotted to overthrow her husband and place her *Christian son, Mardanshah* on the throne. Khusru's *eldest son, Siruzeh, legitimate heir to the throne* and several of his brothers were seized and imprisoned. There was a great outcry and civil strife in Ctesiphon. The Council of Nobles, at last, woke up to the crisis, released Siruzeh from the prison and proclaimed him **King Qobad II 25th Feb 628**. His father, Khusru was deserted by all. He had been seized and imprisoned in the Castle of Oblivion. On **29th Feb 628**, four days after his coronation, Qobad, at the bequest of the feudal lords, signed documents for the assassination of his father. Thus began a disastrous downfall and the ultimate end of a mighty Empire.



Maurice Tiberius CE 582-602



Phocas CE 602-610



Heraclius CE 610-641

QOBAD II (CE 25 Feb 628 - 6 Sept 628), son of Khusru II

(Silver Drachm - Courtesy of the British Museum)



Obverse: 'KaVaTU PiRUCi' (*Qobad, the victorious*). Qobad chose a crown identical to that of Khusru I (his great grandfather) with a tall cap and tiara bearing gemstones front and back. Earrings and Necklace of 2 layers of pearls bear large gemstones. Short hair and beard. Star in front and behind the crown. Star and Crescent on both shoulders embroidered in Cape. Free border of Cape open in front.

Reverse: All the features are those of Khusru II's coin. **Mint:** 'NIH' (*Nihavand*). **Regnal Year:** All his known coins are dated 'TaLIN' (*Year 2*), minted on or after 16 June, once he felt secure on the throne.

Having been a victim of a diabolical plot he did not want to take any chances. Instigated by *Piruz, the Chief Courtier*, he signed a deed for the assassination of **all his brothers and half brothers, numbering 25**. One yet to be born brother (later, to become Khusru V at age 3) escaped. It has been estimated that Qobad II's (about) 40 sisters and half sisters were spared.

CE 628: Having secured a 'safe' throne his next step was to send overtures of peace to Heraclius, who was only too willing to bring all hostilities to an end on his terms. Airan must 1) recall all armies from

occupied territory, 2) must surrender all Roman captives 3) must return the 'True Cross'.

CE 629: Heraclius visited Jerusalem to restore the holy relic back to the holy shrine from where it had been displaced.

Administration:

Qobad passed a decree remitting all taxes for a period of 3 years, releasing a large number of prisoners and compensating the victims of his father.

Having been chastised daily by his many surviving sisters for the dastardly act of ordering the murder of his father and all his brothers, he became a recluse and went into a **profound phase of melancholy**, from which he did not recover. Soon, he refused to exercise his power and took no part in his duties as a monarch. His death within 7 months was, however, attributed to an epidemic of plague, which had killed a third of the population in the Satrapies it had swept through.



Heraclius CE 610-641