

**Zeitschrift:** Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica  
**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft  
**Band:** 78 (1999)  
  
**Artikel:** An important hoard of early south Arabian coins from the Kingdom of Qataban  
**Autor:** Huth, Martin  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-175664>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 16.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

MARTIN HUTH

AN IMPORTANT HOARD OF EARLY SOUTH ARABIAN  
COINS FROM THE KINGDOM OF QATABAN<sup>1</sup>

*Plates 6–8*

*INTRODUCTION*

In August 1994, while working on the foundations for his new house in the village of As-Surayrah near Ar-Rahida (about 75 km south east of the former Yemeni capital of Taiz), a local man found a clay pot allegedly containing 300 silver coins of which about 190 pieces subsequently either turned up on the Sanaa market or were acquired by the Yemeni Antiquities Organisation.<sup>2</sup> Most of the coins are imitations of the 'old style' coinage of Athens. The findspot itself lies within the territory of the ancient South Arabian kingdom of Qataban. Together with the adjacent - and sometimes rivalrous - kingdoms of Saba, Main and Hadramawt, Qataban throughout most of the 1st millennium BC prospered on the transit of the incense trade linking the southern coasts of Arabia with Gaza.

*COMPOSITION OF THE HOARD*

The 190 known silver coins from this hoard have all undergone various attempts at cleaning, resulting in some instances in serious damage. Apart from some (copper?) oxide and sometimes heavy 'corrosion' (resulting from cleaning?) they seem to consist of good silver. Both cleaning and corrosion make it difficult to determine the extent of wear due to circulation. Uncorroded or professionally cleaned coins (*Pl.* 7,

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-six coins from this hoard have been studied in some detail by S.C. MUNRO-HAY, *Coins of Ancient South Arabia*, II, NC 156, 1996, p. 33-47, as part of a private collection of South Arabian coins. Also, 147 coins coming from the present hoard have been described by ABDULLAH *et al.*, *Early Qatabanian Coinage: the As-Surayrah coin hoard*, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1997, p. 203-229). As few numismatists will have access to this publication and because of the obvious need for a summarized description containing, for the first time, all known types, the present account of the hoard's composition has been made. The author wishes to make the As-Surayrah coins available for further in-depth study, while providing some additional views and conclusions derived from this hoard. He would like to thank Leo Mildenberg for his encouragement and the interest shown in these coins. Mildenberg's own work on the coins from the coastal cities of Palestine, together with the coins from this hoard, lead us to realize the existence of a sizeable and interrelated production of Athenian imitations at both ends of the incense road.

<sup>2</sup> As late as 1998, hemidrachms of groups I.2.a and III could be acquired in Taiz; they probably represent the remainder of the hoard.

16), however, do not appear to have circulated for long. The coins are generally round and sometimes somewhat ‘dumpy’, the only exception being the heaviest class of coins where the flan shape greatly varies from round to very oblong. Contrary to Athenian originals and their imitations found in other regions, there are no countermarks or test cuts on any of the coins from As-Surayrah.<sup>3</sup>

Other than the well-known Sabaeen coinage based on a so-called ‘standard unit’ weighing about 5.3 g, the As-Surayrah coins follow the slightly reduced Attic standard which is predominant amongst other imitations of the Athenian type from Egypt, Palestine and Babylonia.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, out of the known 190 coins, the denominations represented include the tetradrachm (37 coins, average 16.44 g), didrachm (51 coins, average 8.04 g), drachm (2 coins, weighing 3.85 and 3.96 g) and hemidrachm (100 coins, average 1.93 g). Of special significance is the occurrence of the didrachm, a denomination only rarely minted even in Athens and never after c. 450 BC.<sup>5</sup>

The die-axis throughout groups I and II is roughly ←, implying the use of fixed dies. It is noteworthy that both the Athenian originals and their eastern imitations share this die-axis.<sup>6</sup> Both state of wear and stylization of the images call for utmost prudence in any effort to identify die-links between different specimens; there are, however, some clear die-links such as between the two didrachms of type 1.2.b (*Pl. 7, 16*), as well as between some of the tetradrachms. Based on the occurrence of different letters and monograms - which call for additional epigraphic study - the following groups and types can be identified:

- <sup>3</sup> Whereas the non-existence of countermarks only underlines the local origin of the coins, the complete absence of test cuts on these and *all other known South Arabian coins* merits further attention. Only few specimens of plated coins in imitation of Athenian types have been found in South Arabia. Therefore, these may have been foreign imports which only rarely occurred. Alternatively, the non-application of test cuts may be due to a very limited circulation of coins outside the official environment in which they were produced. This last idea could also account for the uniform composition of South Arabian hoards (see below, note 23).
- <sup>4</sup> A.D.H. BIVAR, *Achaemenid Coins, Weights and Measures*, *CHI*, vol. 2, p. 615, pointed out that eastern imitations of the Athenian tetradrachm often correspond in weight to two Babylonian shekels, i.e. 16.8 g.
- <sup>5</sup> While the question of dating the Athenian didrachm cannot be considered within the scope of this paper, the author follows C.G. STARR, *Athenian Coinage 480-449* (Oxford 1970), p. 53 f., who dates the last Athenian didrachms (group IV) to just before 450 BC.
- <sup>6</sup> FR. DE CALLATAY, *Les monnaies grecques et l’orientation des axes*, *Glaux* 12 (Milano 1996), only briefly touches upon this important phenomenon. Although he observes the fixed die orientation of the eastern ‘owls’, this fact is not reflected in his chronological tables. Also, while de Callatay is correct in stating the die-axis amongst the *later Sabaeen coins with monograms* (ANS 1456 ff.) as predominantly ↓ he does not note the steadfast orientation of the earlier Sabaeen standard-unit *without monograms* (BMC 1 ff.) as ←. All this is yet another indication that the Qatabanian coins of group I have, in all probability, been struck before the Sabaeen series.
- <sup>7</sup> As the South Arabian *Musnad* alphabet was actually written in both directions (even in boustrophedon) resulting in a different orientation of most letters in either case, the notion of ‘retrograde’ or ‘inverted’ letters held by many authors should be applied with caution.

## CATALOGUE

### *I Imitations of 'old style' Athenian coinage*

#### I.1. Series without Qatabanian monogram

- Obv.* Head of Athena with frontal or profile eye to r., wearing crested helmet, adorned with three or two olive-leaves and scroll, and circular earring. On cheek, different South Arabian letters as value-marks, indicating the denominations represented in this group: *K* (𐩦) for the didrachm, *N* (𐩌, 'retrograde'<sup>7</sup>) for the drachm. The tetradrachms do not bear a value-mark except for a single coin with the South Arabian letter *T* (𐩨) on Athena's cheek.
- Rev.* Owl standing r., head facing; in upper l. corner, olive-spray and crescent. On r., downwards, Greek letters ΑΘΕ with the *alpha* in most cases larger and placed not parallel to the other two letters. Traces of incuse square.

The hoard contained at least 71 tetradrachms, didrachms and drachms of this group (Munro-Hay [M.-H.] types 1.0.4, 1.0.2 and 1.0i), amongst which the following types can be distinguished:

##### a. Coins without additional letters/monograms.

- *Tetradrachms* (28 coins, *Pl. 6, 1-2*, and 1 piece bearing the South Arabian letter *T* (𐩨) as a value-mark, *Pl. 6, 3*). The tetradrachms of this and the following types are fairly accurate copies of the so-called 'pi-style' and 'quadrigité' classes from Athens. Hence, they can be dated to approximately 350 - 300 BC. Interestingly, on four coins, the dot of the *theta* has been converted into a stroke with the result that it resembles a South Arabian *W* (𐩮), a development that coincides on the obverse with a markedly pronounced nostril and a *moustache* (*Pl. 6, 1*).<sup>8</sup> These features may well indicate the first timid attempt to portray a Qatabanian ruler.

The single tetradrachm with the letter *T* (𐩨) on the obv. illustrates, for the first time,<sup>9</sup> the use of this letter as a value-mark well before it was employed to identify a wholly different denomination, i.e. the Sabaeen quarter unit

<sup>8</sup> That there are no die-identities between three of the four coins confirms the unarbitrary character of the above-mentioned peculiarities. The fourth coin I have not seen.

<sup>9</sup> H. SEYRIG, Une question de numismatique gréco-arabe, *Scripta Numismatica*, p. 7-9, and pl. 1,1-5, has noted that the majority of coins from the 1947 Marash hoard in Commagene were countermarked with what he believed to be a South Arabian *K* 𐩦. This would imply that the coins, amongst which was the famous and still unique Tissaphernes tetradrachm (see NC 1948), had at some point made their way to South Arabia (where they would have been countermarked, and where the single piece with the letter in relief would have been added) and from there back to Anatolia, i.e. close to where the Tissaphernes coin had been minted. It would seem more likely to assume that the countermark is a) not a South Arabian *K* and b) was applied somewhere in northern Syria or eastern Turkey. A new coin with the same countermark recently appeared in an auction sale (CNG 49, 1999, 428). It may be added that so far no coins with South Arabian or any other countermarks are known from South Arabia (see above, note 3).

(BMC 16ff.). Less surprising is the use of  $N$  (ϛ) as a value-mark for both the Qatabanian drachm and the Sabaeen unit (BMC 1ff.) and of  $G$  (Γ) for both the Qatabanian hemidrachm and the Sabaeen half-unit (BMC 12f.). All this indicates the adaptation of the Qatabanian system of employing value-marks to the Sabaeen monetary system which was based on a different standard.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from its significance for our understanding of the system of value-marks, the single marked tetradrachm of this type helps us to identify another important coin which has defied previous attribution attempts: this is the unique gold coin of M.-H. type 1.3iii<sup>11</sup> (*Pl. 6, 6*, 1.31 g.) which also bears the letter  $T$  as a value-mark on Athena's cheek. Based on the use of the same value-mark, the identical style (evident in the owl and inscription) and, most important, the known ratio of  $1:13\frac{1}{3}$  between gold and silver,<sup>12</sup> we can now with reasonable certainty assume this coin to be nothing but a Qatabanian tetradrachm in *gold*. Whether the miniting of gold was of an experimental nature or occurred on a larger scale cannot be determined at this stage. The well-known market rules of Timna', though, seem to mention a tax that was payable in «N... (indicating the quantity) Qatabanian gold pieces» (RES 4337B).

- *Didrachms* (36 coins, *Pl. 6, 4*). These are rather uniform in style and fabric. The issuing of didrachms in Athens only occurred during a brief period and eastern imitations of this denomination are extremely rare. Imitative 'didrachms' which are known from Bactria already employ the markedly lighter 'Bactrian' or 'Aryandic' standard. Of more or less correct Attic weight are one coin from Hierapolis<sup>13</sup> and two 'Philisto-Arabian' didrachms.<sup>14</sup> To these may be added Svor. *Pl. 11, 18*, which, on several occasions, has been considered an Eastern imitation (or even an ancient forgery). Therefore, together with this last and the Hierapolis coin, the didrachms from As-Surayrah are the only extant coins from the East which imitate the Athenian didrachm both in images and (approximate) weight.

- *Drachms* (2 coins, *Pl. 6, 5*). While these presumably represent the standard denomination of this first Qatabanian series, it is surprising that out of a known 190 hoard coins there were only two drachms present.

<sup>10</sup> There seems to be little reason to follow those authors who have claimed that the Sabaeans abandoned the Attic standard in favour of a 'Persian' or 'Phoenician' standard. Rather, the Sabaeen unit -which is not really contemporary to either the Siglos or the old Phoenician city-coinage- is most likely based on a local standard the use of which must have been due to an increased domestic need for coinage.

<sup>11</sup> Crédit Suisse, Auction 1, 1983, 157 = MMAG 25, 1962, 478. The coin is not a cast as assumed by Munro-Hay but simply has a later loop attached.

<sup>12</sup> KRAAY, ACGC, p. 31; in the case of our gold coin, a small correction has to be made to allow for deduction of the material used for the attached loop.

<sup>13</sup> Y. MESHORER, S. QEDAR, *The Coinage of Samaria in the Fourth Century BCE* (Jerusalem/Los Angeles 1991), p.14.

<sup>14</sup> H. GITLER, *New Fourth-Century BC Coins from Ascalon*, NC 156, 1996, p. 1-10, illustrated as type D, imitating the *decadrachm* reverse; and E.S.G. ROBINSON, *Two Greek Coin Hoards*, NC 1960, pl. II, 9, showing completely different images.

- b. Coins with additional South Arabian letters/monograms on the neck-guard of the helmet. The following types can be distinguished:

Coins with the letters *lam* and *ayin* (𐩣𐩨)

- *Tetradrachms* (1 coin, *Pl.* 6, 7). This coin is of a distinctive style, depicting Athena's hair in very many ringlets. The meaning of the additional lettering is not clear. The significance of this and the next coin lies in their connection with the equally singular tetradrachms of group I.2.b which have the same letters and thereby provide a link between groups I.1 and I.2.

Coins with South Arabian letter *S*<sup>2</sup> (𐩨)

- *Tetradrachms* (2 coins, *Pl.* 6, 8). The two coins are struck from the same obv. die and although the letter is only faintly visible, its presence is confirmed by the clear rendering on a tetradrachm of group I.2.b (see below).

Coins with South Arabian monogram 𐩧

- *Tetradrachms* (1 coin, *Pl.* 6, 9). A monogram without parallel, probably consisting of the letters *W* (𐩧) and *M* (𐩨); no interpretation of its meaning is at present possible.

## I.2. Series with royal Qatabanian monogram on rev.

*Obv.* Head of Athena to r. as on coins of group I.1. with South Arabian letters indicating the denominations represented in this group: *K* (𐩢) for the didrachm, *G* (𐩢, 'retrograde') for the hemidrachm.

Tetradrachms of this group do not bear a value-mark. No drachms are known of this group.

*Rev.* Owl standing r. between olive-spray/crescent and AΘE as on coins of group I.1. In front of the owl, monogram m.1, composed of the letters *H* (𐩨) and *L* (𐩢). Sometimes traces of incuse.

This and the subsequent groups II and III all share the presence of the monogram 𐩨 on the reverse. This has been identified as the 'royal' Qatabanian monogram; it is also attested from stone inscriptions of several Qatabanian rulers.<sup>15</sup> It would seem that within the Qatabanian series this monogram denotes the issuing authority in the same way as the 'curved symbol' (of Almaqah) and the 'sceptre' do within the later Sabaean and Himyarite series respectively.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the As-Surayrah coins

<sup>15</sup> BOWEN and ALBRIGHT (eds.), *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia* (Baltimore 1958), p. 147; MUNRO-HAY (see above, note 1), p. 38. Notwithstanding the uncertainty regarding its precise meaning, one can safely assume that the monogram is associated with Qataban.

<sup>16</sup> This does not apply to the so-called *Mukarrib*-monogram attested on some Sabaean coins, as the title of *Mukarrib* was transferable between rulers of different kingdoms with only one *Mukarrib* at one time.



represent a hitherto unknown 'national' coinage from South Arabia.

At least 99 tetradrachms, didrachms and hemidrachms of this group (M.-H. 1.0a.4, 1.0a.2 and 1.0a.ii) were present in the hoard, comprising the following types:

a. Coins without additional letters/monograms.

- *Tetradrachms* (2 coins, *Pl. 7, 10*).
- *Didrachms* (13 coins, *Pl. 7, 11*).
- *Hemidrachms* (79 coins, *Pl. 7, 12*). Although these hemidrachms can be placed typologically with the accompanying tetra- and didrachms, they are probably of a later date. Both simplicity in style and the rather flat fabric suggest that, following the 'fading out' of the 'heavy' denominations down to the drachm (maybe due to the emergence of the strong Sabaeen 'standard unit'), the hemidrachm of group I replaced these as the only surviving Qatabanian denomination, followed by groups II and III which exclusively consist of hemidrachms.

b. Coins with South Arabian letters /monograms on the neck-guard of the helmet or on the reverse, with the following variants:

Coins with *lam* and *ayin* (◌<sup>ا</sup>)

- *Tetradrachm* (1 coin, *Pl. 7, 13*). See above, type I.1.b, for a comment.

Coins with *S*<sup>2</sup> (𐩺)




- *Tetradrachms* (1 coin, *Pl. 7, 14*).
- *Hemidrachms* (1 coin, *Pl. 7, 15*). Here the letter is on the reverse, behind the owl's back. On another hemidrachm which has recently come to light in the Qatabanian capital Timna' the letter is on Athena's neck-guard as on the tetradrachm.<sup>17</sup>

Coins with additional monogram 𐩺𐩠

- *Didrachms* (2 coins, *Pl. 7, 16*). This monogram probably consists of the letters *H* (𐩺) and *M* (𐩠). The two die-identical coins are of exceptionally fine style for this series, and show eye of Athena a frontal. They represent the peak of the art of the Qatabanian die-cutter, a fact that is amply underlined by the highest number of monograms and letters combined on a single coin from this series.

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication by Prof. Alexandr Sedov, Moscow.

## II Imitations of 'old style' Athenian coinage with king's head (?) on obv.

- Obv. Male head in hellenistic style r., wearing diadem with South Arabian inscription *LMS'M*:  No value-mark.
- Rev. Owl standing r. as above, Qatabanian monogram  in r. field; behind the owl's back, additional South Arabian monogram .

- *Hemidrachms* (3 coins, M.-H. 1.8aii,<sup>18</sup> *Pl.* 7, 17). As can be observed in the development of other imitative coinages such as the 'Philisto-Arabian' and the Bactrian series, the head of Athena has now been replaced by a male head as a first step towards the emergence of a purely local type (Group III). While the delightful little head is remarkable for its fine execution, the importance of this coin certainly lies with the as yet uninterpreted South Arabian inscription on the diadem. A single coin in the name of a Lihyanite(?) ruler *ŠHRW* is remarkably similar in style.<sup>19</sup>

### III Local types with two heads (c. 150 BC)

- Obv.* Male head with curly hair r.; above, South Arabian inscription 𐩧𐩢𐩨𐩣•𐩬𐩪  
*YD<sup>c</sup>B DB....* (Yad'ab Dhubyān [Yuhargib?]). No value-mark.  
*Rev.* Bearded male head r., with hair tied around ending with a chignon. In r. field,  
South Arabian letter T (X) above an otherwise unknown monogram ṯ. Royal  
Qatabanian monogram Ψ to l. of head (or to its r. below the other mono-  
gram). Above head, one of the following South Arabian inscriptions:

- ገላ፡ባፃ      *YDC'B* ('Yad'ab', a repetition of the king's name from the obv.)
- ነጠአተነፃ      *MLK QTNB* ('King of Qataban')
- ባፃን፤ነጠአተነፃ      *MLK QTNB S<sup>2</sup>YM* ('the King of Qataban [has] made'<sup>20</sup>).

- *Hemidrachms* (17 coins, M.-H. 1.8bii and 1.8biia, *Pl.* 7, 18-20). The legends are partly off-flan and many of the coins of this group are rather worn and corroded. It is therefore impossible to determine with certainty how many pieces there are with either one of the three inscriptions. The reverse of most coins of this group is slightly concave, resembling the much later, and probably last Qatabanian coins (M.-H. 3.28iii) with the mint-name  $\square \Psi$  *HRB*, the name of the royal castle at the Qatabanian capital of Timna' located in Wadi Beihan.

<sup>18</sup> MUNRO-HAY (n. 1, p. 38) reads the inscription as 'GMSM'.

<sup>19</sup> M. RIZACK, A Coin with the Aramaic Legend *ŠHRW*, a King-Governor of Lihyan, ANSMN 29, 1984, p. 25 ff.

<sup>20</sup> See ABDULLAH *et al.* (n. 1), p. 216, and n. 21, for the reading and interpretation of the verb *s<sup>2</sup>ym*.



## CONCLUSIONS

The coins contained in this hoard give us, for the first time,<sup>21</sup> a clear picture of the beginnings of South Arabian coinage. Due to the appearance of the royal Qatabanian monogram 𐩦 within all series present in this hoard, the inscription 𐩧𐩬𐩨𐩣𐩪𐩣𐩪𐩣𐩪 *MLK QTN* (king of Qataban) on coins of group III as well as the findspot within Qatabanian territory, the As-Surayrah coins can be attributed to the kingdom of Qataban. The hoard testifies to the use of the (slightly reduced) Attic standard from the inception of coinage in South Arabia by the Qatabanians in c. 350 BC throughout a period of approximately 200 years, and to an evolution of Qatabanian types from the Attic originals to purely local types. Insofar as the coins of group I are, for economic reasons, modeled on Athenian originals they are obviously part of a much larger, but only insufficiently documented phenomenon covering the Arabian peninsula and occurring mainly along the incense road.<sup>22</sup> But other than the mostly anonymous imitations from the East, the Qatabanian series, through their systematic use of letters and monograms, bear all the hallmarks of a truly national coinage. Regionally, they help us to put the long-known Sabaeen 'standard units' (BMC 1ff.) and their fractions into the context of several evolutionary stages South Arabian coinage underwent in the course of the last three centuries B.C. Coins of group III give the king's name as *Yd'ab...DB* and can, in all probability, be associated with the Qatabanian ruler Yada'ab Dhubyan Yuhargib (c. 150 BC). Typologically, they are the last issues in this hoard and thereby indicate the *terminus post quem* for burial of the As-Surayrah coins.

The As-Surayrah hoard is the most recent in a series of big hoards from which we have, over the last hundred years, primarily derived our knowledge of coinage and coin circulation in South Arabia. Similar to most of these hoards which were each exclusively composed of coins of a single South Arabian kingdom,<sup>23</sup> the present hoard also seems to have contained only coins from one (i.e. the Qatabanian) kingdom. We do not know of even a single contemporary Sabaeen coin from As-Surayrah, a somewhat puzzling fact considering that Sabaeen coinage emerged as the lead-

<sup>21</sup> So far, only 5 uninscribed tetradrachms of group I.1.a in the Berlin cabinet which were brought by Glaser or Mordtmann from South Arabia have been known (published in J. N. SVORONOS, *Trésor des monnaies d'Athènes*. (Munich 1927), pl. 111, 4-8).

<sup>22</sup> For a tentative grouping of different Athenian imitations from the peninsula, see M. HUTH, S. QEDAR, A Coin from North Arabia with an Aramaic Inscription and Related Coins of the Incense Road, NC 159, 1999 (forthcoming). For a discussion of the strange 'folded flan' imitations which also follow the slightly reduced Attic standard, see M. HUTH, The 'Folded Flan' Coinage of Eastern Arabia: some preliminary comments, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1998, pp. 273-277. Of special interest is the typological relation between these various groups of imitations and the 'Philisto-Arabian' coins.

<sup>23</sup> These hoards can be summarized as follows

1. The *Sanaa* hoard of 1878 (SCHLUMBERGER, *Le Trésor de San'a*, Paris 1880), consisting of 200 coins of the Sanaa A and B classes;
2. The *Marib* hoards of 1921 and 1983;
3. The *Baḡil* hoard of 1989 (DAVIDDE, *Observations on 29 Silver Coins from the Baḡil hoard*, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1995, 246 ff.) containing 181 Sabaeen 'standard units';

ing currency in South Arabia during the third century BC. The reasons for such uniformity in composition must lie with the political and economic conditions in South Arabia and with the particular motives which caused the collecting and burying of large numbers of coins. Be this as may be, the As-Surayrah treasure should be seen as yet another reminder of both the international character of contemporary trade relations based on an almost universally accepted currency standard, and the important role the Qatabanians must have played in the Arabian trade. It is to be hoped that further epigraphic study will complete our understanding of this remarkable coinage.

### *Zusammenfassung*

Die 190 bekannten Münzen aus dem 1994 entdeckten Fund von As-Surayrah (Republik Jemen) belegen erstmals die Prägung von nach leicht reduziertem attischen Standard geschlagenen «Eulen» in Südarabien. Fundort sowie die auf den Münzen vorkommenden Inschriften und Monogramme erlauben eine Zuschreibung an das südarabische Königreich Qataban. Die hier dokumentierte Serie fügt sich, wirtschaftlich betrachtet, ohne weiteres in das regionale Phänomen lokaler Imitationen athenischer Münzen ein und erweitert dieses beträchtlich. Anders als die zumeist anonymen und allenfalls vereinzelt mit Namen versehenen Imitationen zeichnet sie sich jedoch durch ihre systematische Verwendung von Buchstaben, Inschriften und Monogrammen aus und erlangt dadurch den Charakter einer bewusst konzipierten, nationalen Münzprägung. Die in zunächst größeren Nominalen (Tetradrachmen, Didrachmen und Drachmen) erfolgte Münzprägung durchläuft eine auch andernorts (Philisto-Araber, Baktrien) beobachtete Entwicklung hin zu lokalen Typen; diese werden schließlich nur noch als Hemidrachmen ausgebracht. Letztere lassen sich aufgrund ihrer Inschrift dem qatabanischen Herrscher Yada'ab Dhubyan Yuhargib (ca. 150 v.Chr.) zuordnen und bestimmen so den *terminus post quem* für die Vergrabung des Fundes.

Martin Huth  
61bis, Rue de Lyon  
CH-1203 Genève

4. The *Hureihar* hoard of about 450 local AE imitations of the Athenian type (unpublished, but see A. SEDOV, *The Coinage of Ancient Hadramawt*, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1995, p. 41).  
Also, 135 Himyarite and 149 Sabaeen coins of the 'Bucranium' type contained in the so-called 'Bombay collection' (S.C. MUNRO-HAY, *Coins of Ancient South Arabia*, NC 154, 1994, p. 191-203), due to their different states of preservation and the different deposits on them, possibly represent two individual hoards each containing coins of only one type.

## Key to Plates 6–8

### Plate 6

#### *Group I.1a* (First series with value marks, no additional letters/monograms)

1. Tetradrachm, 16.86 g.
2. Tetradrachm, 16.65 g.
3. Tetradrachm with South Arabian letter T as a value-mark on Athena's cheek, 16.08 g. (obv. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
4. Didrachm, 7.93 g.
5. Drachm, 3.96 g.
6. Tetradrachm in gold (not from hoard, ex MM 25, 1962, 478), 1.31 g.

#### *Group I.1.b* (with additional letters/monograms)

7. Tetradrachm with letters *ayin lam*, 16.64 g. (obv. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
8. Tetradrachm with letter S<sup>2</sup>, 16.61 g.
9. Tetradrachm with monogram WM (?), 16.1? g.

### Plate 7

#### *Group I.2.a* (Series with royal Qatabanian monogram on rev.)

10. Tetradrachm, 15.49 g. (rev. heavily tooled)
11. Didrachm, 8.20 g. (rev. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
12. Hemidrachm, 1.96 g.

#### *Group I.2.b* (with additional letters/monograms)

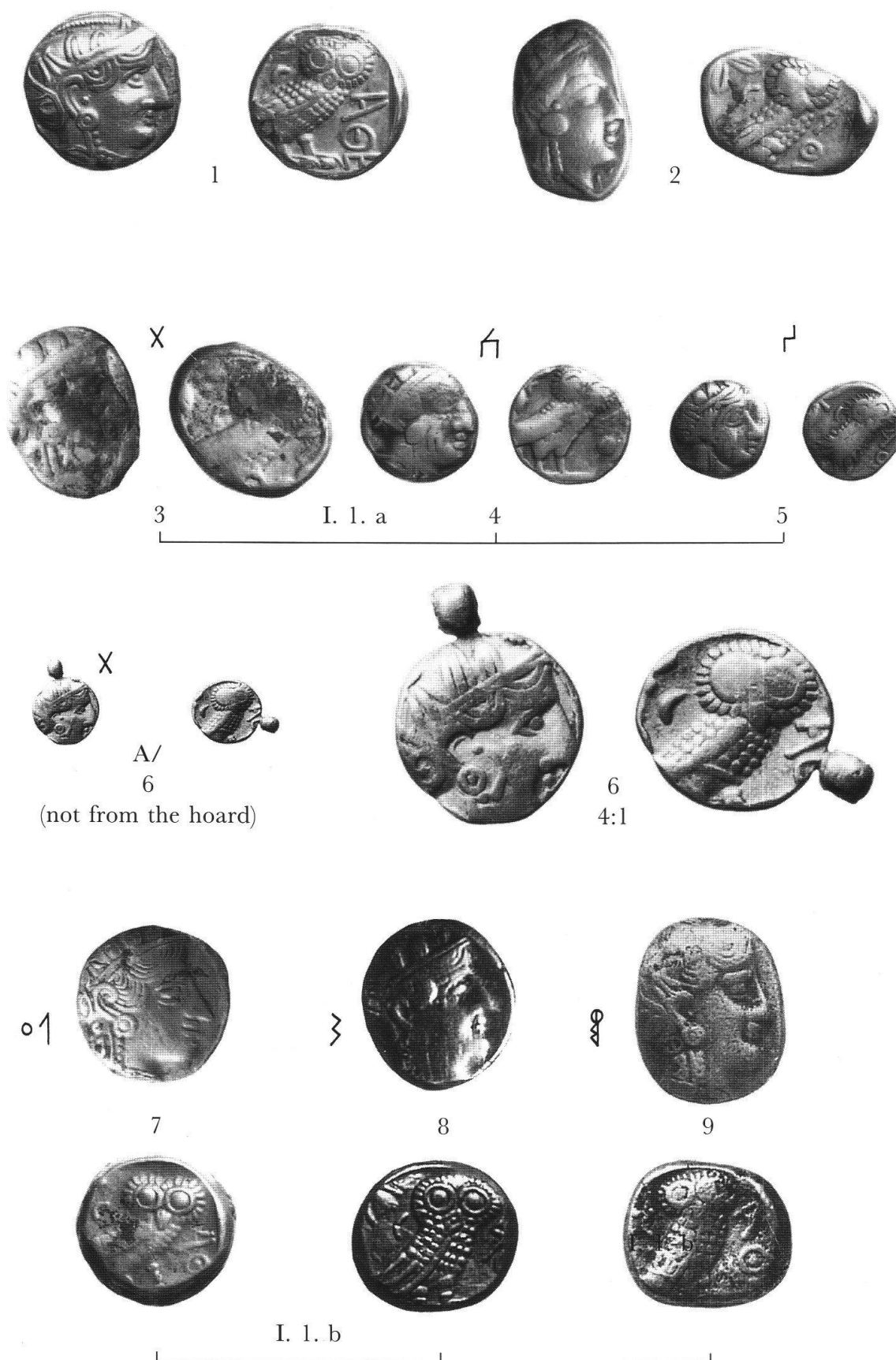
13. Tetradrachm with letters *ayin lam*, 16.39 g. (obv. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
14. Tetradrachm with letter S<sup>2</sup>, 16.40 g. (rev. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
15. Hemidrachm with letter S<sup>2</sup> on rev., 1.89 g. (rev. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
16. Didrachm with monogram on obv. (obv. enlarged on *Pl. 8*), 8.21 g.

#### *Group II* (male head wearing inscribed diadem/owl)

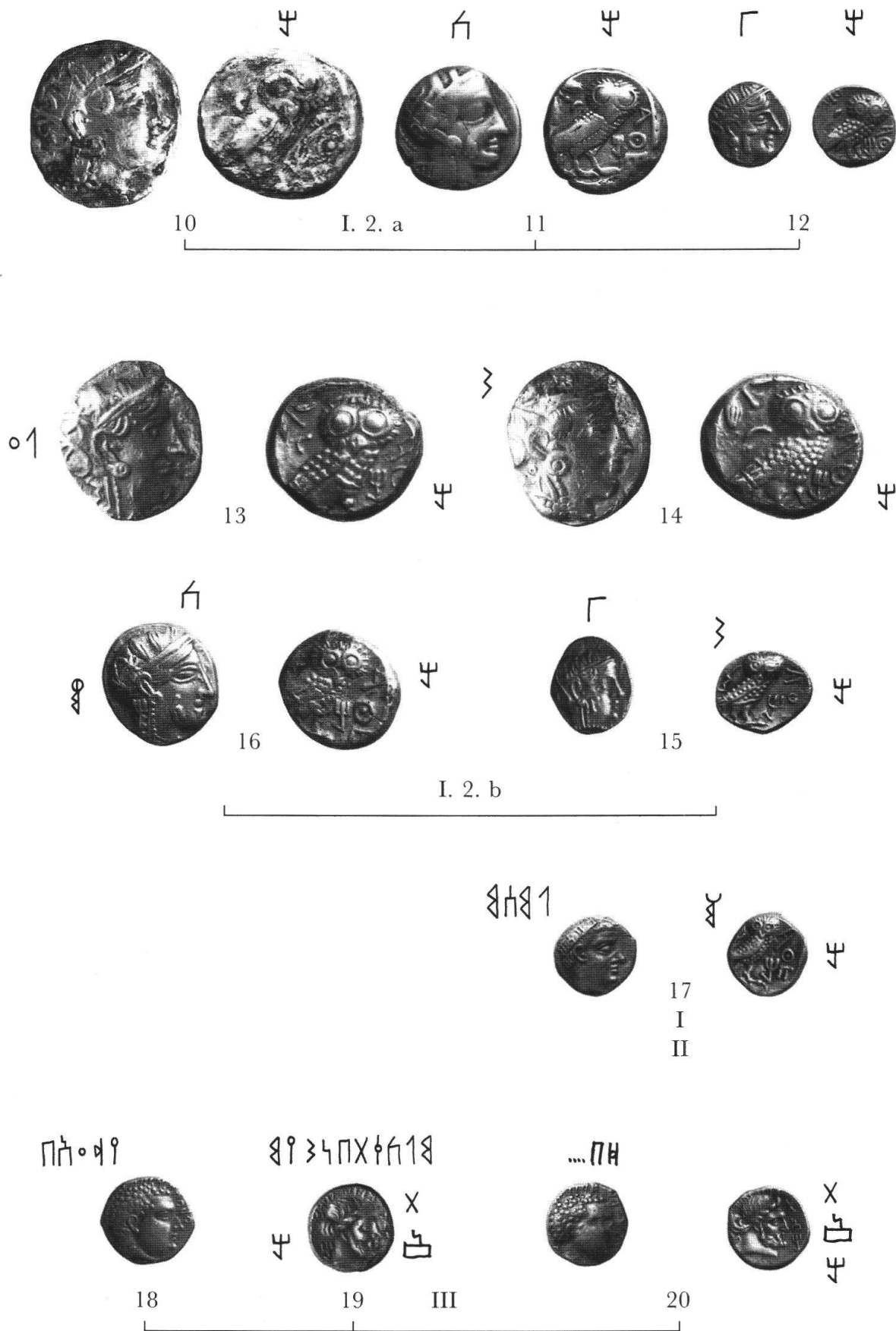
17. Hemidrachm, 1.94 g. (enlarged on *Pl. 8*)

#### *Group III* (male head on both obv. and rev., various inscriptions and monograms)

18. Hemidrachm (obv. only), 1.87 g. (enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
19. Hemidrachm (rev. only), 1.81 g. (enlarged on *Pl. 8*)
20. Hemidrachm, 1.90 g. (rev. enlarged on *Pl. 8*)













7 (obv.)



3 (obv.)



13 (obv.)



14 (rev.)



11 (rev.)



16 (obv.)



15 (rev.)



17



20



18 (obv.)



19 (rev.)



