



ABZŌN

ABZŌN, Middle Persian term meaning “prosperity, increase” in Zoroastrianism. The Avestan word *spənta* (usually translated as “holy” or “bountiful”) implies increase and abundance. It is generally translated into Pahlavi by *aβzōnīk*, “increasing, prosperous.” The rendering of *spənta* by *aβzōnīk* looks to the result of the activity of the being who is *spənta*, i.e., possesses the supernatural power (*nērang*) needed to promote the wellbeing of the world, which is the *aβzūt* of living creatures. It is evident that one who is *aβzōnīk* is he whose activity results in *aβzūt*, *the sūt ut frahaxtišn ī gēhān*, i.e., the wellbeing and prosperity of the world. Zoroastrianism is a religion of growth, increase, fulfillment and prosperity. The growth in virtue of the individual is seen as part of the growth of the whole community. The consummation of all things is increase—from one thing, many things (*Dēnkard*, p. 148.16-17). “Increase and multiply” is the basic Zoroastrian message, not only by propagating the human race, but also by developing to the utmost both individual talent and all spiritual good (R. C. Zaehner, *Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, London, 1961, p. 268).

Pahlavi *aβzūtan* means “to increase, to augment.” Various forms *aβzūi*, *aβzū*, *aβzūn*, and *aβzūtānēt* are noticed on the obverse of the coins of the last Sasanian kings and on a great number of seals. It is a common form of blessing. J. Olshausen (*Die Pehlevi-Legenden auf den Münzen der letzten Sasaniden*, Copenhagen, 1843, p. 25) was the first to decipher the term *aβzūt* “crescat!”

The word *aβzū* is found on the obverse of the coins of Kavād I, Kōsrow I,



Hormazd IV, and Bahrām VI. There also appeared a monogram, which replaced this word on the coins of Hormazd IV in the sixth year of his reign. On the coins of Kōsrow II the word *aβzūn* or *aβzūt* is accompanied by a monogram similar to that on the coins of Hormazd IV. Mordtmann read the complete phrase as *zamān aβzūt* “tempus augeatus;” Stickel as *sim* “argentum auctum;” B. Dorn as *gadman*; and E. Drouin as *gadah* “majesty,” translating this monogram with *aβzūn* by “Long live His Majesty.” The modern reading is *xwarrah aβzūt*, “whose Fortune is augmented” (see [Farr](#)). *Aβzūn* appears on the obverse, with the name of the king, from the 16th regnal year of Kavād I. It is also seen on the coins of Kōsrow I, behind the head of the king. Drouin (*Les Legends des monnaies Sassanides*, Paris, 1898, p. 39) traces the term to *aβzōnik*.

Aβzūtānēt appears to be an irregular causative of *aβzūtan* “to increase, to prosper.” Professor H. Nutzel of the Berlin Museum deciphered the inscription on the obverse of the gold coin of Kōsrow II as *āīrān afzūtānētī* “may he cause Ērān to prosper.”

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