

Part IV, Ch. 10
Aksum 1972-1974: A Consideration of the Dating from the Coinage.

By S.C. Munro-Hay.

During the excavations at Aksum conducted by the BIEA under the direction of H.N. Chittick, from the first trial trenches investigated in 1972, through the major excavations of 1973 and 1974, 170 coins came to light. The following schedule, arranged by site locations, gives the ^{register} numbers, location stratigraphically, identification with reference to Anzani (1926), and finally the type identifications set out in Munro-Hay (1978, 1984). One or two of the metal flans found were only tentatively identified as coins, and these and certain much-worn coins are marked accordingly as illegible or unidentified. The schedule is followed by a list of first the silver and then the bronze coins in approximate chronological order of reigns; no gold coins came to light during these excavations.

Although photographs are supplied of (most of) the 1973 coins, there appear to have been no photographs taken of the 1974 coins, this task having doubtless been left over for the next season, which was cancelled. Access to the coins has not been possible since.

For a bibliography of Aksumite numismatic studies, see Munro-Hay, (1984), pp. 38-42. Additional to this are the following;

*These to be sent from UK as I have the references
in my own copy of the book!*

Small

1972-1973: Coins in site order

Site	Location	King (Anzani)	Anzani	Register No. King (Munro-Hay)
1. AX (1972)	AX. ST I (4a)	Kaleb & succ.	or BICA nos. 1972/	Anon AE 2
2. Gebgeb	surface	Wazena		261 Wazena AE I
3. MS	clearing	Kaleb & succ.	161	262 Anon AE 2
4. ST NW	upper	Iōēl	BI 5	263 Iōēl AR 2
5. ST	ST V(2)	Kaleb		(ii) 264 Anon AE 2
6. ST	ST XII E (7)	Iōēl	200	265 Iōēl AE I
7. ST	ST XII F (3)	Wazena	253	266 Wazena AE I (2 coins)
8. ST	ST XII E (10)	Wazena	258	267 Wazena AE I
9. ST	ST XV(2)	Ezana and succ.		268 Anon AE I
10. ST	ST XX (4a) or XIX(4a)	Unident		269
11. ST	ST XX (8) Skafv	Kaleb & succ.	153	270 Anon AE 2
12. ST	ST XX (9) "	Unident		271
13. ST	ST XX (9 or 11)	Hataz II	282	272 Hataz AE 2
14. ST	ST XX (11) Ch 2	Wazena	255	273 Wazena AE I
15. ST	ST XX (11) "	Wazena	255	274 "
16. ST	ST XX (11) "	Kaleb & succ.	164	275 Anon AE 2
17. ST	ST XX (11) "	Unident		276
18. KAL	KAL I(2)	'Armah		277 'Armah AE Ia
19. KAL	KAL I(2)	'Armah	268	65 'Armah AE Ia
20. KAL	KAL I(3f)	Ouazēbas	71	278 Ouazēbas AE I
21. KAL	KAL I(4)	Iōēl	211	279 Iōēl AE 3
22. KAL	KAL I(Ia)	Ezanas, no rel. g. symbol		151 Ezanas, no rel. symbol ARI
23. KAL	KAL I(3a)	Iōēl	211	280 Iōēl AE 3
24. KAL	KAL I(5a) top of pit	Iōēl	211	281 i & iii Iōēl AE I ii Iōēl AE 3
25. KAL	KAL I(5a)	Ouazēbas	71	282 Ouazēbas AE I
26. KAL	KAL I(5a1)	Kaleb & succ.		283 Anon AE 2
27. KAL	KAL Ia(4a)	Kaleb & succ.	163	284 "
28. KAL	KAL Ia(3a)	Kaleb & succ.		285 "
29. KAL	KAL Ia(4a)	Kaleb & succ.	160	286 "
30. THA	surface	Unident		287
31. THA	surface	Gersem	279	288 Gersem AE I
32. THA	THA VI(4)	Ezana & succ.		289 Anon AE I
33. THA	THA VIII(2)	Ezana & succ.		290 Anon AE Ia
34. THA	THA III(1)	'Armah		291 'Armah AE Ia
35. THA	THA VI(3)	Ezana & succ.	44	53 Anon AE I
36. THA	THA VIII(1b)	Kaleb Ezana & succ.		292 Anon AE 2
37. THA	THA XIII(1)	Haile Sela-ssies5c.		293
38. THA	THA XVI(1)	Unident.		294
39. ES	ES I (7)	Kaleb & succ.	153?	295 Anon AE 2
40. ES	ES I (7)	Kaleb & succ.	170	296 "
41. ES	ES I (7)	Kaleb & succ.	164	297 "
42. ES	ES III (1a)	Hataz	BI 1	298 Hataz AR 2b
43. ES	ES III (3b)	Kaleb	150?	299 Anon AE 2
44. ES	ES IV (1)	Hataz II	293	300 Hataz AE 2
45. ES	ES IV (2)	Kaleb & succ.	153	301 Anon AE 2
46. ES	ES IV (3)	Ezana & succ.	BI 2	302 Anon AE 2
47. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	284	303 Hataz AE 2
48. ES	ES IV (3) stat	Hataz II	284	304 Hataz AE 2
49. ES	ES IV (3)	Gersem	279	304 Gersem AE I

Site	Location	King (Anzani)	Age	Anzani or BIA nos.	Register No. Index (Munro-Hay)
50. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	C 8-9	284	303 Hataz AE 2
51. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	C 8-9	284	303 "
52. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	C 8-9	284	303 "
53. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	C 8-9	284	303 "
54. ES	ES IV (3)	Unident	C 8-9	284	305 Gersem AE I
55. ES	ES IV (3)	Armah		260	306 Armah AE Ia
56. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	C 7-9	284	307 Hataz AE 2
57. ES	ES IV (3)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	308 Hataz AE 2
58. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	309 "
59. ES	ES IV (5)	Kaleb & succ.	C 6		310 Anon AE 2
60. ES	ES IV (5)	Gersem	C 8-9	279	311 Gersem AE Ia
61. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 7-9	273	312 Hataz AE I
62. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	313 Hataz AE 2
63. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	288	313 Hataz AE 2
64. ES	ES IV (5)	Wazena	C 7-8	253	314 Wazena AE I
65. ES	ES IV (5)	Kaleb & succ.	C 6		315 Anon AE 2
66. ES	ES IV (5)	Kaleb & succ.	C 4		315 Anon AE 2
67. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	316 Hataz AE 2
68. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	317 "
69. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	317 "
70. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	317 "
71. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	317 "
72. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	317 "
73. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	317 "
74. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	318 Hataz AE 2
75. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	294	318 "
76. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	288	318 "
77. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	288	318 "
78. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	318 "
79. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	318 "
80. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	318 "
81. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	318 "
82. ES	ES IV (5)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	318 "
83. ES	ES IV (5a)	Agdur	C 6-7	813	319 Za-ya (abiyo la Madkhen, Anon AR I (also another from ESV, AGB AR 2 labelled 319 by error ?)
84. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	320 Hataz AE 2
85. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	321 "
86. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	322 " (3 coins)
87. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	323 "
88. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	287	324 "
89. ES	ES IV (5a)	Ezana	C 4	47	325 Anon AE I
90. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	326 Hataz AE 2
91. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	282	327 "
92. ES	ES IV (5a)	Hataz II	C 9-10		328 "
93. ES	ES IV (5b)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	329 "
94. ES	ES IV (7)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	330 "
95. ES	ES IV (7)	Quazēbas	C 4-5	71	331 Quazēbas AE
96. ES	ES V (2a)	Ezana & suc	C 4-5	44	332 Anon AE I
97. ES	ES V (7)	Gersem	C	BI 4	333 Gersem AE 2
98. ES	ES V (10)	Hataz II	C 9-10	273	334 Hataz AE I
99. ES	ES V (10)	Hataz II		273	335 "

<u>Site</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>King (Anzani)</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Anzani</u>	<u>Register No. King Index (Murro-Hay)</u>
00.ES	ES V(10)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	336 Hataz AE 2
01.ES	ES V (10)	Hataz II	C 9-10	291	337 "
02.THA	THA dump	Kaleb & suc	C 6		338 Anon AE 2
03.ES	ES V (10)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	339 Hataz AE 2 (2 coins)
04.ES	ES V (10)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	340 " 2
05.ES	ES V (10)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	341 "
06.ES	ES V (10)	Ioel	C 7-8	208	342 Iōēl AE 3
07.ES	ES V (10a)	Unident		616	343 Iōēl AR I
08.ES	ES V (10)	Ioel	C 7-9	200	344 Iōēl AE I
09.ES	ES V (11)	Gersem	C 8-9	279	345 Gersem AE I
10.ES	ES V (11a)	Hataz II	C 9-10	284	346 Hataz AE 2
11.ES	ES V (15)	Anaeb (Ebana)	C 6	191	347 Ebana AE I
12.ES	ES Backfill	Kaleb & suc	C 6	150	606 Anon AE 2
13.ES	ES Backfill	Ezana & suc	C 4	44	605 Anon AE I
14.AX	AX Surface	Kaleb & suc	C 6	150	601 Anon AE 2
15.ES	ES Backfill	Armah	C 7-9	263	602 Armah AE Ia
16.ES	ES Backfill	Hataz			347A Hataz AE ?

1974: Coins in site order

	Site	Location	King (Anzani)	Anzani	Register No Index	King (Munro-Hay)
117	AX.ST	XII F Backfill	Kaleb & succ.		788	Anon AE 2
118	AX.ST	XII F (2)	Quazēbas		789	Quazēbas AE I
119	AX.ST	XII FW (5d) (4c = 4j?)	Wazena		790	Wazena AE I
120	AX.ST	XII E	Wazena?		791	?Wazena AE I
121	AX.ST	XXII A, dump or (4)	Wazena		792	Wazena AE I
122	AX.ST	XXII A (4e) (left of S.T.C)	Ezanas pagan		793	Ezanas pagan AE I
123	AX.ST	XXIII A (4c)?	illeg. prob. Kaleb & succ.		794	Anon AE 2
124	AX.ST	XXII D (3a)	Kaleb & succ.			
124	AX.ST	XXII D (3a)	Ezanas & succ.		795	Anon AE I? ^{nb. gold on reverse}
125	AX.ST	XXII D (4)	Ezanas & succ.		796	Anon AE I ^{MHDY5?}
126	AX.ST	XXII B (4) ^{Wazena}	Ousanas AR 18		797	Ousanas AR 2
127	AX.ST	XXII G (3)	Ezanas & succ. 61		798	Anon AE I
128	AX.ST	XXII G (4a)	Wazena 255		799	Wazena AE I
129	AX.ST	XXII G (5c1)	Kaleb & succ. 172		800	Anon AE 2
130	AX.ST	XXIII H (5c)	Wazena 255?		801	Wazena AE I
131	AX.ST	XIII E ext. (2)	AE illegible = Ezanas & succ (?)		802	Anon AE I?
132	AX.ST	XXIII (4)	Wazena 255-8		803	Wazena AE I
133	AX.ST	XXIII (5)	illegible AE		804	illegible
134	AX.ST	XXIII (2a)	Kaleb & succ. 164-166		805	Anon AE 2
135	AX.ST	XXIII (2a)	Coin??		806	illegible
136	Sh. Tomb	A (Ch H & I)	Hataz II 291-293		807	Hataz AE 2
137	"	A (Ch H)	AE illegible		808	illegible
138	"	A? Dump.	Ioēl 201		809	Ioēl AE I
139	THA	VII (7) from tomb	Ezanas & succ.		810	Anon AE I
140	THA	VII (7)	Kaleb & succ.		811	Anon AE 2
141	THA	VII (7)	Ezanas & succ.		812	Anon AE I
142	THA	XVII ss (1)	Kaleb & succ. 150A		813	Anon AE 2
143	THC	II ss (1)	Kaleb and succ.		814	"
144	THC	VIII (2)	Ezanas & succ. 44		815	Anon AE I
145	THC	VIII (2)	Ezanas & succ. 44ff		816	"
146	THC	VIII (3a)	Ezanas & succ. 53-4		817	"
147	THC	IX under reversed flagstone (SSO)	Hataz I (?)		818	Hataz AE I (?)
148	THC	XIII (2)	Ezanas & succ.		819	Anon AE I
149	THA	XVII (4) ^{n.b. a coin is recorded in THC XVII (4a), but is not likely, possibly it is should be THC?}	Armah 268		820	Armah AE Ia
150	THC	XVI C	AE illegible		821	illegible
151	DA	(1) topsoil	Kaleb		779	Kaleb AE 2
152	DA	(1) clearance	Ezanas & succ?		780	Anon AE I
153	GT	VI (1)	Ezana & succ?		781	"
154	GT	X (1)	Ezanas or K 42 or		782	"
155	AX	XXII (3)	Kaleb and succ 121			
155	ML	II (3)	Ioēl AE		783	Ioēl ?
156	ML	II (3)	Illegible AE		784	illegible
157	NM	VI 30cm below pillar and socle	Kaleb		785	Kaleb AE 3
158	NM	VI (2)	AR Za-ya'abiyo la madhen		786	Za-ya'abiyo la Madhen. Wazena A AR I
159	NM	X (1)	Hataz II "new type AE?"		787	?
160	IW	IA (5) } found together	AE illegible		822	illegible
161	IW	IA (5)	AE 'Armah		823	'Armah AE Ia
162	IW	IA (5)	AE Kaleb & succ		824	Anon AE 2
163	IW	IV (3a)	Ezanas & succ 70A		825	Anon AE I
164	WC	(3)	Kaleb 159		826	Anon AE 2

Silver and bronze coins of Aksum from the 1972-4 excavations,
in approximate chronological
order

9/72

AR		1972 coin from Ax St I (4)	
797/74	Ousanas AR 2	315/73 (2 coins)	262/73 (also reg as 11/73)
151/73	Ezanas, no symbol AR I	338/73	264/73
302/73	Anon AR 2	606/73	270/73
343/73	Ioel AR I	601/73	275/73
263/73	Ioel AR 2	788/74	283/73
786/74	Za-ya'abiyo -la-Madkhen Negus	794/74	284/73
319/73	Anon AR I Wazena AR I	800/74	285/73
319/73	Za-ya'abiyo -la-Madkhen Negus	805/74	295/73
319/73	by error labelled here?	811/74	296/73
298/73	AGD AR 2	813/74	297/73
	Katag AR 2b	814/74	286/73
AE		824/74	299/73
793/74	Ezanas pagan AE I or AE 2	826/74	301/73
268/73	Anon AE I	779/74	310/73
289/73		785/74	
290/73		261/73	Kaleb AE 2
292/73		266/73 (two coins)	Kaleb AE 3
325/73		267/73	Wazena AE I
332/73		273/73	
53/73		274/73	
605/73		314/73	
780/74		790/74	
781/74		791/74 (?)	
782/74	Gold on reverse; = HHDS ?	792/74	
795/74 (?)		799/74	
796/74		801/74	
798/74		803/74	
802/74 (?)			
810/74			
812/74			
815/74		265/73	Ioel AE I
816/74		281/73 (i & iii)	
817/74		344/73	
819/74		809/74	
825/74		279/73	
278/74	Quazabas AE I	280/73	Ioel AE 3
282/73		281/73 (ii)	
331/73		342/73	
789/74			

silver & bronze coins of Aksum from the 1972-4 excavation in
approximate chronological order (contd)

Hataz here.

• 65/73		• 336/73	Hataz AE 2 (contd.)
• 277/73	Armah AE Ia	337/73	
• 291/73		339/73	(two coins)
• 306/73		340/73	
• 602/73		341/73	
• 820/74		346/73	
• 823/74		• 347A/73, Hataz AE (?)	
• 288/73		807/74	
• 304/73	Gersem AE I and Ia	269/73	Unidentified
• 311/73 (AE Ia)		271/73	"
• 345/73		276/73	"
• 333/73	Gersem AE 2	287/73	"
• 312/73	Hataz AE I	294/73	"
• 334/73		305/73	"
• 335/73		804/74	"
• 818/74 (?)		806/74	illegible
• 272/73	Hataz AE 2	808/74	"
• 300/73		821/74	"
• 303/73	(six coins)	784/74	"
• 307/73		822/74	"
• 308/73		293/73	Haile Sellassie
• 309/73			
• 313/73 (i and ii)			
• 316/73			
• 317/73 (six coins)			
• 318/73 (nine coins)			
• 320/73			
• 321/73			
• 322/73 (three coins)			
• 323/73			
• 324/73			
• 326/73			
• 327/73			
• 328/73			
• 329/73			
• 330/73			

Uncertain classification
783/74 AE Joel
787/74 AE Hataz

These can't be checked until
seen at Aksum - no photos,
apparently

Recent study of the coinage of Aksum (Munro-Hay 1978 et seq) has led to some clarification of the order of the issues, differing considerably from the sequence as proposed by Anzani (1928). In particular, the ordering of the late fourth, fifth and sixth centuries has been significantly revised, the anonymous bronze issue Anon. AE 2 attributed formerly to the post-Kaleb period in the sixth century being now considered as a late IVth or Vth century issue on the basis of several overstriking upon coins of MHDYS. This and other coinage questions shed a certain light on the relative chronology of some of the areas excavated by the BIEA at Aksum; differing from the chronology suggested in the published 'Preliminary Report' (Chittick, 1974).

The significance of the coinage as a dating agent in most of the levels of the Stele Park (ST. in the location labels) is undoubtedly very minor. The Park has been the scene of the excavation of innumerable galleries and tombs on a vast scale, in Aksumite times, and later the area was disturbed by the illicit diggings of robbers. The erection of the stelae themselves involved the digging of pits everywhere in the Park, the raising of mounds for the aligning of the stelae, and subsequent levelling after erection of each stele, and there must be scarcely any part of the Stele Park which has remained undisturbed from ancient and modern diggings. Even so, one or two of the coins found have some relevance to the chronology, where the levels appear to be in some way sealed.

The coin of the anonymous 'Kaleb and Successors' type (designated Anon.AE.2 here), no. 1 in the schedule, 1972/9, found beneath the fallen Stele 103 in ST. I (4a), was presumed by the excavator, following Anzani, to have been of the sixth century. The re-dating of the appearance of this type to perhaps a century earlier, possibly to the very beginning of the Vth century, together with other recent dating suggestions for the coinage (Munro-Hay, loc. var.), may indicate that the whole archaeological sequence needs to be considered as of earlier date than so far conceived. The rest of the coinage found in any useful context, excepting those pieces of doubtful identity or provenance, is largely of the earlier coinage-issuing kings, except for Iōēl, Hataz, Wazena, and 'Armah. Chittick, (1974), has already mentioned those coins which seem to have some relevance, from their find-spots, to the dating of Aksum. Apart from the 'Kaleb and Successors' coin from ST. 1 (4a), referred to above, these comprise the coins of Wazena, Ousanas, Ēzana, 'Ēzana and Successors', Kaleb and 'Kaleb and Successors', and Iōēl, from the Stele Park; those of 'Ēzana and Successors' and Wazena overlying Shaft Tomb (Catacomb) B, and of Wazena, Hataz and 'Kaleb and Successors' in or around Shaft Tomb (Catacomb) A; those of 'Kaleb and Successors', Wazena, Kaleb, Ēzana, Za-ya' abiyo la-Makhen Negus, Gersem and Hataz at Enda Sem'on; of 'Armah and 'Kaleb and Successors' in the IW area; and finally the coins

of Ouazēbas, 'Kaleb and Successors' and Iōēl in the Kaleb Building,

KAL I.

In spite of the disturbances of the sites, which prevent dealing with the coinage from these areas in the manner of de Contenson's analysis of the 1958 excavations in the Maryam Tseyon region, a glance at the schedule arranged in site order does give some impressions. Firstly, the predominance of Wazena in the Stele Park (c.f. Chittick, 1974, p. 169), is notable; most of the other coins are earlier, mainly the two anonymous bronze issues, Anon. AE 1 and 2, with one each of Ouazēbas, Ēzanas as a pagan, and Ousanas. Iōēl and Hataz also appear in the Stele Park, but much less prominently (Iōēl AR.2 and AE.1; Hataz AE.2). The area around the Tomb of the False Door, THC and THA, has an equally distinctive coinage assemblage. The majority of coins are of the two anonymous bronze issues AE.1 and AE.2, with two of 'Armah (and one each of Gersem (surface find) and Haile Sellassie). On the other side of the central Stele Park, the DA site, (the topsoil and fill of the Tomb of the Brick Arches), also has only anonymous bronzes, like the GT sites, in the Gudat Stele field. These two sites, however, have hardly any coins, and the coinage finds here and elsewhere may well be attributable to the relative frequency of certain types within the series.

The Kaleb area seems to have two coinage periods represented;

the coins of Ezanas, Ouazēbas, and the Anon. AE.2 issue, followed by Iōēl and 'Armah. In contrast, ES (Enda Sem'on), has a distinct later emphasis, Hataz predominating, with coins of Gersem, Iōēl, 'Armah, Wazena and Za-ya'abiyo la Madkhen Negus; though there are a few earlier types, the Anon. AE.2, AE.1, and Ouazēbas being represented in the assemblage. The IW site, in the same general region as ES, has a much smaller coinage assemblage, Anon.AE.2 and 'Armah (one specimen of each identified), being found in the fill.

This broad overview, deriving as it does from unequal proportions of samples, nevertheless indicates fourth and fifth century activity in the Stele Park, around the Tombs of the False Door and the Brick Arches, and the Kaleb, Gudit, and ES areas. In Wazena's time some activity may have occurred in the Stele Park, and a little later comes the second period at Kaleb, and some activity at IW. The heavy predominance of the coins of Hataz at ES also indicates a later Aksumite presence there. To these general comments may be added a few more specific observations from coins found within stratified contexts.

Chittick, 1974, p. 64, mentions the Anon. AE 2 coin, 1972/9, (fig. 1), found 'apparently securely stratified in hard clay,' ST. 1 (4a), running under the fallen stele 103 in the northwestern corner of the Stele Park. This trench included only the topmost corner of the stele 103. The stele must have fallen, covering level (4a) some time after the deposition of the coin. The dating of Anzani for his 'Kaleb and Successor' types (sixth

century AD) was accepted by Chittick, but it is now clear that the origin of this issue must be placed earlier, beginning either with or directly after the reign of MHDYS., (Munro-Hay, 1978, p.120; Munro-Hay, [~~MHDYS and Ebana~~, Azania] 1979; also Sauter, Azania 1979). Whilst no definite date may be given, somewhere around the beginning of the fifth century seems fairly certain for the first issues of the Anon. AE.2.

Stele 102 had already fallen before the accumulation of the clay levels (4) and (4a), in both ST. I and II, which partially covers it. The information provided by this coin gives a relative chronology for the collapse of stelae 102 and 103. Whether the collapse of stele 102 had occurred as early as the beginning of the fifth century, when the coin was perhaps issued, or whether this event occurred much later and the issue was a long-circulating one, as de Contenson (1958) has suggested, is impossible to say with certainty: the redating of the Anon. AE.2 issue merely makes it possible that the levels concerned are earlier than the excavator originally envisaged.

The coins found in the Stele Park trenches in 1973 and 1974 and which have some significance in the dating analysis, number seventeen. These coins' site locations were;

264/73	Anon AE.2 ST.V (2)
265/73	Iōēl AE. 1 ST.XIIE(7)
266/73	Wazena AE.1 ST.XIIF (3)
267/73	Wazena AE.1 ST.XIIE (10)
790/74	Wazena AE.1 ST.XIIFW (5d)

- 792/74 Wazena AE.1 ST.XXIIA dump, probably from level (4)
- 793/74 Ezanas, pagan AE.1 ST.XXIIA (4e)
- 794/74 Anon. AE.2 ST.XXIIIA (4c)
- 795/74 Anon. AE1 (?) ST.XXIID (3a)
- 796/74 Anon. AE.1 ST XXIID (4)
- 797/74 Ousanas AR.2 ST.XXIIB (4)
- 798/74 Anon. AE.1 ST.XXIIG (3)
- 799/74 Wazena AE.1 ST.XXIIG (4a)
- 800/74 Anon. AE.2 ST. XXIIG (5c1)
- 801/74 Wazena AE.1 ST.XXIIH (5c)
- 803/74 Wazena AE. 1 ST. XXIII (4)
- 805/74 Anon. AE.2 ST.XXII (2a)

n.b. This list differs from Chittick (1974) only in that there ~~were~~ three, not four, Anon. AE. 1 pieces in these locations.

These locations cover the approximately 60m. span stretching from stele 20 to stele 12, and encompassing the area containing the three Shaft Tombs A,B, and C, the platforms and various buried stelae and base-plates. To the north the area reaches back to the modern Stele Park wall. The number of features in this area indicate quite adequately how constant must have been the disturbance in the region; first the construction of the platforms, then two extensions at least (Chittick, 1974, p.166), followed by the excavations, re-sitings of dump material, and

the like, consequent upon the erection of the stelae, and the sinking of the shafts for the underground tombs. Collapse of underground tunnels and subsidence of areas of the Stele Park is indicated by the underground stelae and base-plates in, for example, ST. XXIIJ.

The coin of the pagan king Ousanas, 797/74, type AR.2 of that monarch, was found in a stratum (ST.XXIIB (4)) which also contained a coin of the Anon AE.1 class, 796/74, ST.XXIID (4). This level overlay the platform and its extension to the south. Coin 795/74, also ^{AE} Anon.1, was found in ST.XXIID (3a), a pit cut later into the platform extension, perhaps to accommodate stele 136. The excavator suggests that the earlier coin could have been a stray. However, the period of time between the reign of Ousanas, (early C.4th AD) and that of Ezanas even in the later part of his reign (i.e. after 356AD) may not have been so great as to necessarily preclude the circulation of coinage of the pagan kings. The two were very possibly direct successors, if Wazeba is presumed to have ruled briefly before, or even for a period with, Ousanas early in his reign, (Munro-Hay *EJES* nov. 1984.) This conclusion is justified by the relative rarity of Wazeba's coinage (only one gold and a few silver are known), and his joint issue with Ousanas, of which two examples are known to date, (Anzani, 1941, 15/1; Munro-Hay, 1984, p.66). If we assume that Ezanas began the issue of the Christian Anon. AE.1 type, (and only one specimen (Munro-Hay 1984 p.83) of his Christian bronze survives) the rest being pagan and an issue without religious

symbol, as also with his silver issues, then they may well have emerged not too long after the conversion of the king c.330AD. Although the relative positions of the coins within level (4) are not indicated, The coins suggest that the extended platform and deposits covering it were in place by the reign of Ousanas, and that a pit into it (for the dressed stele 136) was being dug in the early Christian period.


The second pagan coin was of Ēzanas, type AE.1, 793/74, and was found in ST.XXIIA (4e), that is, in the shaft-fill of Shaft Tomb C. This indicates that the tomb was prepared either in the reign of Ēzanas or later; the shaft itself was cut through platform deposits, and was already there when stele 136, perhaps its marker-stele, was erected. With such mobile objects as coins, the chances of a coin lost generations before being included in the fill of a later tomb are very large, and the tomb in question may post-date Ēzanas very considerably. However, in level (4c), which, with (4d) overlies (4e) where the coin was found, was a sherd of African Red Slip ware, dated to c.350-400AD, so the cutting of the shaft through the platform, and the filling, could have occurred by the mid-4th century.

The remaining coins of the Anon. AE.1 and 2 classes were found in various of the ST. trenches in not very significant contexts, beyond showing activity in the Park in the fourth and fifth centuries AD. One, of Anon. AE.2 type, 800/74, was found in Shaft Tomb (Catacomb) B, (ST.XXIIG (5c1)) in the fill of the shaft, which was sealed by level (4) which contained a coin of

Wazena, 799/74, in ST.XXIIG (4a); level (3) of the same trench contained a coin of the Anon. AE.1 type 798/74. There is nothing surprising in the finding a coin of the early fifth century (?) issue Anon. AE.2 in the fill of a tomb later sealed by a deposit containing a coin of Wazena; the coin of Anon. AE.1 type must have been either a still circulating piece of the earlier issue, a stray, or from a part of the deposits overlying the platform area not disturbed when the shaft of Shaft Tomb B was dug.

The coinage of Wazena is the commonest type in the Stele Park. There were seven specimens of the issue Wazena AE.1 found in the trenches of the central area, as well as two from Shaft Tomb A. The dating evidence for this king's coins, from both internal stylistic factors, and archaeological evidence, is still a problem. Generally, he is placed amongst the latest of the Aksumite rulers, but there is a certain amount of evidence for a fifth-century date, hinging on the possibility of his identity with the king Ousanas or Ousana known from his gold issues. No bronzes for Ousana(s) are known, and the Wazena AE.1 type would comfortably fill this gap. Ousana(s) himself has been redated recently (Anfray 1968; Munro-Hay 1978; Oddy and Munro-Hay 1980; Munro-Hay 1984) to the fifth century, Anzani, Vaccaro and others having previously given him a post-Kaleb date.

Wazena and Ousana(s).

Puglisi's evidence (1940), and de Contenson's (1958) division of the coinage based on the Aksum 1958 excavations, are enough to distinguish and widely separate Ousanas the pre-Christian king and Ousana(s), AR 'no symbol' type, from Wazena. But there are two further Aksumite kings with the names Ousana and Ousanas, issuers of gold coins, who belong to the Christian series largely from South Arabia, though in fact only Ousanas A.181 has such a provenance (and some of the Ousana examples have been acquired in Ethiopia proper, though none were with attested provenance (pers.comm. G.Tringali). The style of the portraits and the costume of the AE Wazena (Za-Wazen, taken as a title by Mordini (1949)), are as close to those of the gold of Ousana as of any other king; some of the Nezana and Nezoöl, the Anon. AV.2 Kaleb, and Alla Amidas/Allamirwis, are similar, but nothing of the later kings seems a likely parallel. The Ousas AV.2 (A.190) is similar too. The curved form of the aigrette at the king's forehead, and the 'humped' style of the robes, incline with the curved fillet to identify the two kings Ousana and Wazena; the reverse cross has an excellent predecessor with Ebana AR. 1; the Ge'ez of Wazena is neater and better aligned than Israēl, 'Armah, Gersem, Hataz; the  is not rounded, but triangular like some of the examples of Iōēl, Za-Ya 'abiyo la-Madkhen Negus, Kaleb and MHDYS, (Munro-Hay 1984iii). The use of Ge'ez is to be expected, at any time after Wazeba and MHDYS; but despite these features there are other aspects of the coins of Wazena which

seem later.

Of these, the appearance of the sceptre cruciger in the form of a barley-stalk is paralleled by 'Armah AR. 1, (a type resembling Za-Ya 'abiyo la-Madkhen Negus (Wazena) AR.3 in its reverse architectural scene). Also, there is the use of symbols in the field, as single and triple dots, crescents, small crosses, which occur also on some AR and AE coins of 'Armah, Iōēl, Za-Ya 'abiyo la Madkhen Negus, Gersem and Hataz. These symbols, which seem to have some chronological significance, are lacking for the reigns of Kaleb and his predecessors. As is so often the case, the stylistic criteria may be interpreted to favor both sides of the argument, depending where the emphasis is put.

Archaeological evidence, from Aksum (de Contenson 1958), has Wazena in Group III with Za-Ya 'abiyo la-Madkhen Negus and 'Armah; Anon. AE. 1 and 2 and Ebana and Iōēl precede in Group II. The inscription of Wazena AE. I being the Ge'ez version of TOYTGAPETHXWPA has led to a suggestion of a Vth or VIth century date by Chittick (1974), commenting on the coin evidence for the dating of the Stele Park, 1973-4. Puglisi found Wazena's coins with 'Armah, Anon. AE 2 and Iōēl, tending to agree with de Contenson's grouping, though the groups overlap. Wazena's style of bust and design are much closer to the earlier styles than Iōēl's, yet Iōēl certainly appears to precede in de Contenson's estimation. Wazena accordingly, has been placed (Munro-Hay 1978 loc. var., 1984 p.140) with Wazena AR.1, later

than Iōēl, and not with the gold of his homonyms before Kaleb; but the possibility that he is in fact identical with Alla Amidas, direct successor or contemporary ruler to Kaleb, has emerged from the suggestions put forward in Munro-Hay, EICES 1984. This suggestion solves all the difficulties of style and the presence of 'control-marks', and would place Wazena around the second quarter of the 5th century AD.

Shaft Tomb A.

Shaft Tomb A contained, like Shaft Tomb B, a coin of the Anon. AE.2 type in the lower part of the fill (270/73, ST.XX (8)). More puzzling were the coins of Wazena and Hataz within the tomb itself; 273/73 and "74/73, Wazena AE.1; "72/73 Hataz AE.2; 807/74, Hataz AE.2. The excavator commented that there must have been some disturbances in this region, perhaps robber activity, (Chittick 1974, p.171) since the coinage from this tomb would seem to cover too long a period for all the types to have been in current circulation. However, as noted above, doubts have been expressed about the position of these coins in the sequence. The Anon. AE.2 type of the fifth century may have run until the reign of *whose AE.I issue simply replaces the anonymous legend with the king's name,* Kaleb, and if Wazena was a contemporary of Kaleb's (see above) there is no difficulty there. Hataz, as suggested in both Hahn 1983, and Munro-Hay, EICES 1984, may not have been the last Aksumite coin-issuing king, but may rather have reigned in the later sixth century; if so, his coins could easily have accompanied others current in the earlier part of the century.

Enda Sem'on.

In ES 1, in level (7), below the floor of the surviving structure, were found three coins of the Anon. AE. 2 type, 73/295, 296 and 297. If this building is part of the same structure as the rooms in ES IV, some 15m. north and on the same alignment, it is interesting to observe that the fill (ES IV (5) and (5a)) of these latter contained, apart from Anon. AE. 1 and 2, a coin of Wazena, 73/314, (ES IV (5)); one of the Anon. AR 1 type of Za-Ya'abiyo la-Madkhen Negus, 73/319, (ES IV (5a)); one of Gersem AE. 1a, 73/11, (ES IV (5)); one of Hataz AE.1, 73/312, (ES IV (5)); and twenty-nine of Hataz AE 2, 73/309, 313 (2), 316, 317 (6), 318 (9), (all ES IV (5)); 320, 321, 322 (3), 323-4, 326-328 all ES IV (5a); 329 came from ES IV (5b). Schedule nos. for these are 58-93, (m.b. the similar predominance of Hataz' coins in the Maryam Tseyon Niveau II; de Contenson 1963, p.8). The excavator assumed that the finding of Anon. AE 2 below the floor of ES I precluded the possibility of this part of the building being earlier than the sixth century AD; but the re-dating of the type to an earlier period brings the possibility of a fifth-century date. If the two areas ES I and ES IV are from the same structure, there is still, in the Anon. AE 1, 325/73, ES IV(5a), an earlier coin in the fill than under the floor, and it must be assumed to be a stray or from a still-circulating issue. The rest of the coins seem to represent continuous ^{sixth} ~~6th~~ century occupation of the structures until at least the time of Hataz or Gersem.

In ES V(11) coins of Gersem (345/73) and Hataz (346/73) were found; the deposits were in the fill of room 4; a coin of Ebana (in bronze) was found in room 1, (347/73), ES V (15), a level sealed by (10), which contained coins of Hataz and Iōēl (334-7, 339-344/73). The indication is of ^{sixth} 6th century occupation in the rooms, the Ebana coin being either from an earlier deposit (no floor is mentioned, but a note for level (16) mentions a 'square pit' (possibly from an earlier structure?) below (15), and in turn sealing (19) which overlies bedrock and is 'pre-building?' or a 5th century coin in long use.

The IW Building.

The structure at the site of IW seems to have been a (two-storey?) building which was destroyed by fire. The area yielded, in the debris on the floor of one of the rooms, coins of king 'Armah, 823/74, the Anon. AE. 2 type, 824/74 and an illegible bronze coin 822/74. All of these were found together in IW. 1A (5). It seems quite likely in view of this that de Contenson was correct in his opinion that the circulation of the Anon. AE. 2 coins went on for a considerable time, (early C.5th - late C6th?).

The Kaleb Building.

Trench 1 was dug by the outer wall of a structure near the NE corner of the northern church. Walls of three periods were

found, with coins predominantly of 'Armah below the topsoil, 277 and 65/73, KAL I (2), and of Iōēl (279-80/73, Iōēl AE. 3) in the fill, KAL I (4) and KAL I (3a), and 3 in a pit (KAL I(5a), room B), in the floor 281/73 (i-iii). A coin of Ouazēbas also in this level may have been from below the floor, 282/73. A coin of Ouazēbas 278/73, was in the make-up of the floor of one room, Room A, KAL I(3f), and two of the Anon. AE 2 'Kaleb' type (284 and 286/73) in the floor make-up of another, KAL Ia (4a). None of this information is at odds with the proposed order of kings: the excavator's date of the VIth century could, as in the ES building, perhaps be a century earlier, since the re-dating proposed for the Anon. AE 2; but their circulation period may have been considerable.

DA

The coins from the DA region are of no use to the chronology, since there are only 779/74, Kaleb AE 2 from DA (1), topsoil, and 780/74, Anon. AE 1, from DA (1) clearance. However, 779/74, 151 on the Aksum schedule, is of interest as it is apparently a new type, described as 'new type in Ge'ez with cross on reverse'. The coin remains in the Aksum Museum and cannot, at present, be studied.

GT

Only two coins came from the GT trenches, both Anon. AE. 1, 781-2/74, nos. 153 and 154 in the schedule. Both also came

from topsoil levels, GT VI (1), and GT X (1) respectively.

Munro-Hay 1984: 20
Zōskalēs

Sembrouthēs

GDR

GDRT

WDBH or 'DBH

Endubis

Aphilas

Ousanas

Wazeba

Monumentum Adulitanum

Meroë inscr.

Ella Amida

Ēzana(s)

Eōn Bisi Anaaph

Anonymous AV.I coins

Quazēbas

MHDYS

Ebana (Esbaēl or Esbana)

Ousas

Ousana(s)

Nezana

Nezoōl

Tazena

Khalēb Ella Aṣbeḥa

W'ZB

Alla Amidas

Allamiruis

Ella Gabaz

Aṣḥama Ibn Abjar

Iōēl

Wazena

Za-ya'abiyo la Madkhen Negus.

'Armaḥ

Israēl

Iathlia

Gersem

Hataz

Ella Sahēl (?)

Dan'ēl

Hahn, 1983

Endubis

Aphilas; Ousanas=Sembrouthes

Wazebas I Ella Amida

Ezanas; Ousanas II=Sazanas

Ella Asbeha

Eon; Wazebas II (W'ZB)

MHDYS

E(s)bana

Ousa(na)s III; Nezana=Nezool
=Tazena

Kaleb=Ella Asbaha

Allamidas=Allamiruis; Ellagabaz

Israel; Iathlia

Gersem; Ioel; Hataza

Wazen Sagad=Za Wazenaz

Armaha

Munro-Hay 1984iii; 8th Int. Conference
for Ethiopian Studies, Nov. 1984
c. 200 GDRT (BYG)
c. 260-270 DBH (GRMT)
C. 32

Zōskalēs

Sembrouthēs } =? ←

Endubis

~~GDR/GDRT~~ Aphilas ?

~~WDBH~~ Wazeba ?

Ella Amida= Ousanas I ?

Mon. Adulit and Meroë
inscriptions?

Ēzana(s)

MHDYS

Quazēbas

Eōn Bisi Anaaph

Ebana

Anonymous AV.I coins.

Ousas and/or C.5th

Ousana(s)

Nezana and/or Nezoōl=

Tazena ?

Khalēb Ella Aṣbeḥa

Alla Amidas=Allamiruis=
Wazena AR.3 and AE.I ?

Ella Gabaz=AGD ? =W'ZB ?

Iōēl

Iathlia=Hataz ? C.6th

Israēl

'Armaḥ

Gersem C.7th

(n.b Type designations (AR.. AV.. etc) are those taken
from Munro-Hay 1984, where there are drawings of all
known coin types. A full set of photographs was pub-
lished by Hahn (1983).