

Artabanus II (c. A.D. 10 - 38)

APTABANOS

King of Media Atropatene and an Arsacid on his mother's side. He was selected to replace [Vonones I](#), whose Roman lifestyle did not appeal to Parthian nobles. His attempts to wrest the throne were at first defeated -- as one competing issue of Vonones' coins attests -- but he eventually emerged victorious. During his reign he sent [a letter to Susa](#) which was inscribed on marble, and is now preserved at the Louvre. See the [genealogy chart](#).

See the article, "[Identifying Look-alike Parthian Drachms](#) : Differentiating the Drachms of Artabanus II , Gotarzes II and Artabanus III ."

[Click here](#) to view the inscriptions on this king's coins.

Coins Attributed to Artabanus II

Click on coin images to enlarge:

See the fourrée tetradrachm attributed to [Artabanus II](#).

Sellwood Type 61

Note that the tetradrachms of Artabanus have two distinct variants:

Sellwood 61.1 = hair is in four formal rows of curls

Sellwood 61.2-6 = these have two broad waves or "hair flowing", as described by Wroth in BMC Parthia, the same hair style as on [type 62](#)



Artabanus II

Billon tetradrachm, 14.25 g

Mint/ [Seleucia](#), date unreadable

Obv/ bust left with long beard wearing diadem and spiral torque with no visible end; four formal rows of curls with no ear or earring visible, hair above diadem as ringlets; no wart; circular border of dots

Rev/ male wearing diadem seated right on throne, extending right hand; to his right, Tyche stands left presenting palm branch in right hand, and holding cornucopia in left; above her arm, Greek letters [BKT] (vertical); in exergue, Greek letters (?); seven-line Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚ[ΟΥ] / [ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ] / [Ε]ΠΙΦΑΝ[ΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ], the date above arm is present but unreadable and the exergue date is off flan; no border

Photo/ by permission Henri Delger, [Old Roman Coins for Special Collectors](#)

- Sellwood 61.1 variant (year BKT)

- BMC Parthia cf. p.146, 1-3 and plate XXV, 1



Artabanus II

Billon tetradrachm, 14.12 g

Mint/ [Seleucia](#), month August

Obv/ bust left with long beard wearing diadem and spiral torque with no visible end; four formal rows of curls with no ear or earring visible, hair above diadem as ringlets; no wart; circular border of dots

Rev/ male wearing diadem seated right on throne, extending right hand; to his right, Tyche stands left presenting palm branch in right hand, and holding cornucopia in left; above her arm, Greek letters ΓΟΡ (vertical); in exergue, Greek letters (?); seven-line Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, but the year date in exergue is off flan

Photo/ by permission [Malter Galleries](#)

- Sellwood 61.1 variant (year BKT)

- BMC Parthia cf. p.146, 1-3 and plate XXV, 1



Artabanus II

Billon tetradrachm, 12.48 g

Mint/ [Seleucia](#), A.D. 12

Obv/ bust left with long beard wearing diadem and spiral torque with no visible end; hair in two rows of flowing waves with ear and earring visible, hair above diadem as ringlets; no wart; circular border of dots

Rev/ male wearing diadem seated right on throne, extending right hand; to his right, Tyche stands left presenting palm branch in right hand, and holding cornucopia in left; above her arm, Greek letters ΓΟΡ (vertical); in exergue, Greek letters ΕΤΟΥΣ ΓΚ[Τ]; seven-line Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ; no border

Photo/ of the original Petrowicz plaster cast by Chris Hopkins

- Sellwood 61.2

- BMC Parthia p.149,28

- [Kunsthistorisches Museum](#), Vienna 35817 (this coin)

- Samm. Petrowicz pl. XVI-4 (this coin)



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.7 g, 29 mm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Additional images/ [[study image obv](#)]

Obv/ bearded bust of king left, wearing diadem, diadem ends as three lines, long hair with no earring or ear visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer seated right on throne wearing kyrbasia and cloak; in right hand, bow, below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription Sellwood ii

Location/ V. Kucherov collection

Photo/ E. Rtveldze, *The Ancient Coins of Central Asia* (1987)

- Sellwood 61.7

- Rtveldze 16 (this coin)



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.69 g

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bearded bust of king left, wearing diadem, diadem ends as three lines, long hair with no earring or ear visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer seated right on throne wearing kyrbasia and cloak; in right hand, bow, below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription Sellwood ii

Photo/ by permission Henri Delger, [Old Roman Coins for Special Collectors](#)

- Sellwood 61.7



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bearded bust of king left, wearing diadem, diadem ends as three lines, long hair with no earring or ear visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer seated right on throne wearing kyrbasia and cloak; in right hand, bow, below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription Sellwood ii

Photo/ by permission [Dan Case](#)

- Sellwood 61.7



Artabanus II

AE 13 mm, 1.69 gm, die axis = 11h

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left

Rev/ amphora(?)

Photo/ by permission Thomas K. Mallon, [The Coins and History of Asia](#)

- Sellwood 61.12 variant

- Shore 569

Sellwood Type 62



Artabanus II

AR Tetradrachm, 12.58 g

Mint/ [Seleucia](#), May, A.D. 23

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with long beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and four pendants, hair in three distinct rows; border of dots; in front, year ΔΛΤ

Rev/ king enthroned left receiving palm from Tyche holding scepter; between them kneeling man (Vonones?) offering diadem; Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ / ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ. In exergue ΔΑΙΣΙΟΥ

Photo/ by permission Henri Delger, [Old Roman Coins for Special Collectors](#)

- Sellwood 62.3



Artabanus II

AR (debased) Drachm

Mint/ [Susa](#), June, A.D. 24

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three pendants, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ king enthroned left, receiving diadem from kneeling man (Vonones?), year date above ΤΛΕ; Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ / ΝΙΚΙΦΟΡΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ, legend on left read from outside. In exergue, ΠΑΝΗΜ

Photo/ by permission from collection of Sadollah Valavi

- Sellwood 62.8



Artabanus II

AE (debased), a copper "drachm"

Mint/ [Margiane](#)

Obv/ bust left with long square cut beard wearing diadem and spiral torque with no visible end; medium-length straight hair with earring visible, no wart; in front and behind, Nike flying with diadem; border (?)

Rev/ beardless archer wearing bashlyk and cloak seated right on (?), holding bow in right hand; below bow, Greek letter Π; three-line Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ / ΒΑΣΙΛΕ[ΩΝ] / ΑΡΤΑ legend on right read from outside; no border

Photo/ by permission [Classical Numismatic Group](#)

- Sellwood 62.12

- CNG E-Auction 90 (26 May 2004), lot 47 (this coin)

- BMC Parthia, p.138, 15 (Phraataces)

- Shore, not listed

Sellwood Type 63



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Additional images/ [[large obv & rev](#)]

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, legend on left read from outside

Photo/ by permission Smithsonian Institution, [National Numismatic Collection](#)

- Sellwood 63.6



Artabanus II Modern Forgery

Click on the coin image at left to see a Sellwood type 63 silver drachm forgery



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.72 g

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, legend on left read from outside

Note/ reverse overstrike

Photo/ by permission Henri Delger, [Old Roman Coins for Special Collectors](#)

- Sellwood 63.6

- Shore 341



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.48 g, 20 mm, die axis = 12h

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, legend on left read from outside

Photo/ by permission Thomas K. Mallon, [The Coins and History of Asia](#)

- Sellwood 63.6
- Shore 341



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 18x20 mm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Additional images/ [[large obv & rev](#)]

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟ[Υ] / [ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ] ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / [Ε]ΠΙΦΑΝΟΥ [ΦΙΛΕ]ΛΛΗΝ[ΟΣ], legend on left read from outside

Photo/ by permission [David Garstang](#)

- Sellwood 63.6 variant (legend)



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ, legend on left read from outside

Photo/ by permission

- Sellwood 63.6
- Shore 341



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.37 g, 20 mm, die axis = 1h

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, earring visible

Rev/ archer seated right on throne holding bow. Somewhat blundered Greek legend; below bow monogram

Photo/ by permission Thomas K. Mallon, [The Coins and History of Asia](#)

- Sellwood 63.6
- Shore 341 variant



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.6 g, 20x22 mm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, earring visible

Rev/ archer seated right on throne holding bow. Somewhat blundered Greek legend; below bow monogram

Photo/ by permission Teresa Darling, [WCNC](#)

- Sellwood 63.6



Artabanus II

AR Drachm, 3.87 g, 20 mm, die axis = 11h

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, earring visible

Rev/ archer seated right on throne holding bow; somewhat blundered Greek legend with extra line on inside of bottom part of legend (see note); below bow [monogram 26](#)

Photo/ by permission Thomas K. Mallon, [The Coins and History of Asia](#)

Note/ sometimes double- or multi-striking of coins can create difficulties. In Fred Shore's *Parthian Coins & History*, there are several instances of misidentification of coins as a result of double-striking. These are Shore 344 (this coin) and 345. The extra lines of legend on the reverses of these coins are simply remnants of the under-type which, in the case of this coin, have been slightly mutilated giving the impression that there is what Shore considers to be ΟΠΕΛΥ on the inside of bottom part of legend. These are not variants of the main type, only a bad strike of a known subtype.

- Sellwood 63.6, but double-struck legend on reverse

- Shore 344 (this coin)



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, earring visible

Rev/ archer seated right on throne holding bow; somewhat blundered Greek legend; extra line on inside of bottom part of legend; below bow [monogram 26](#), legend not like Sellwood 63 ii or iii

Photo/ by permission

Note/ this is another example where double-striking of coins has created a difficulty. Here is a very clear example of a double-strike creating extra lines of legend on the reverse; on this coin the remnants of the under-type have been slightly mutilated giving the impression that there is a monogram above the bow.

- Sellwood 63.6, but double-struck on reverse



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ legend on left read from outside

Photo/ by permission [Fred W. Haumann](#)

- Sellwood 63.6



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard, wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, hair almost straight, earring visible; border of dots

Rev/ beardless archer, seated right on throne; in right hand, bow; below bow [monogram 26](#); Greek inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩ[Σ] ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ / ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ / ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣ / [Ε]ΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ [Φ]ΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ legend on left read from outside

Photo/ by permission

- Sellwood 63.6



Artabanus II

AR Drachm

Mint/ [Rhagae](#), undated

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with medium square cut beard wearing diadem with loop at the top and three ends, earring visible, hair almost straight

Rev/ archer seated right on throne holding bow; somewhat blundered Greek legend; [monogram 29](#) below bow

Photo/ by permission [Elena Stoyanov](#)

- Sellwood 63.7



Artabanus II

AE 10 mm, 1.21 gm, die axis = 12h(?)

Mint/ [Ecbatana](#), undated

Historical Site of Mirhadi Hoseini
<http://m-hosseini.ir>

Obv/ bare-headed bust left with straight beard and hair, wearing diadem

Rev/ amphora(?)

Photo/ by permission Thomas K. Mallon, [The Coins and History of Asia](#)

- Sellwood 63.28? variant

- Shore 582

source:

<http://www.parthia.com/artabanus2.htm>