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NEWSLETTER no. 113

July - August 1988



We conclude the present series on ONS office holders with David Priestley, our Hon. Treasurer. David was born in Hove, Sussex in 1937. His education at the local grammar school ended at the age of sixteen when he skipped school and went off to Paris. The idea was to work a passage to the French West Indies and thence to South America. This adventure, however, came to nothing and he spent the next few years training desultorily for an accountancy qualification. At the age of 21 he emigrated to what was then Northern Rhodesia. He spent fourteen years in all in Africa, ending up as Controller of Audits in the Zambian Government Service. David returned to England in 1973 and has remained a professional accountant since then. His interest in coins began at an early age. One of his earliest recollections is, at the age of about 11, spotting some Roman coins in a jeweller's shop in Shoreham. With an advance of pocket money he walked the 10 mile return journey to maximise his purchase power and came away with a number of Alexandrian tetradrachms at the princely price of 4d each! David regards himself as an enthusiastic collector rather than an expert. Some special interests are coins of the Turcomans, of Anatolia from classical times, Central Asia and the Indian sub-continent. In pursuing his particular interest in Urtuqid coins, he has visited South Eastern Turkey three times, including the mint cities of Mardin, Diyarbakir, Hisn Kaif and Harput. David's other interests are travelling — apart from his extensive journeys in Turkey, he has been to Afghanistan, India and Uzbekistan — and music. David is married, with a daughter and two grandsons.

Members' News

1. Rajesh Lodha ... issues price-lists regularly for South East Asian bank-notes, coins and medals, world bank-notes, and Nepal and Tibetan coins. These lists are available free to members on application.
2. Dr. Craig Burns has donated his collection of 664 Kushan coins to the Bernese Historical Museum (Helvetiaplatz 5, CH-3000 Bern 6, Switzerland). The collection, mainly gold, covers the first four centuries of the Christian era and has coins of over 20 Kushan rulers. The Bernese Historical Musseum has acquired several important Asiatic coin collections over the years. In 1914 it acquired over 1000 Asian coins as part of the extensive ethnographical collection of Henri Moser-Charlottenfels. The then Director, R. Wegelin, added systematically to the holdings by purchases and the donation of his own large collection. More recently, the collections of C. H. Kieffer and Prof. Robert Göbl were also acquired. The Museum has promised that Dr. Burns's collection will remain intact, and will be available for scholarly research. In due course a catalogue will be produced. A special exhibition "Münzen der Kuschan" (Coins of the Kushans) can be seen at the Bernese Historical Museum from 10 June to 2 October this year (Tuesday - Sunday, 10am - 5pm).

Symposium

The British Museum together with the U.K. Numismatic Trust are holding a symposium on the Techniques of Coin Production on 9-10 September 1988 at the British Museum. The fee is £15. Further details from Miss M.M. Archibald, Dept. of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG.

New and Recent Publications

1. Spink Numismatic Circular for June 1988 contains an article by Samuel Lachman entitled The Zaidi Imam al-Mahdi Ahmad b. al-Hasan. 1087-92H/1676-1681. The article publishes coins of this Imam in gold, silver and copper and considers the historical and commercial background to their issue.
2. Volume XI (December 1987) of the Numismatic Digest has just been published. The contents include the following articles:
 - D. W. MacDOWELL: Impact of Alexander the Great on the coinages of Afghanistan and N.W. India.
 - N. KOTHARI & M. MORRISON: Copper punch-marked coins from Ujjain.
 - N. R. DESHMUKH: Coin of Sunyamitra from Paunar.
 - L. C. GUPTA: Lead coins from Karnataka.
 - P. L. GUPTA: The Brahmanya coins.
 - A. M. SHASTRI: Some observations on the "Mandi" hoard of Yaudheya and Kuninda coins.
 - C. A. BURNS: Coinage of the King of Kings Vasudeva Kushana.
 - K. K. MAHESHWARI: An extremely rare coin of Masand Ghujanavi.
 - P. L. GUPTA: Horseman-type quarter tankah of Muhammed bin Sam.
 - N. KOTHARI & M. MORRISON: Earliest Shahrukhi of Babur.
 - A. H. SIDDIQUI & M. AMJAD ALI: Nizam Shahi type Mughal copper coins.
 - K. W. WIGGINS: A new Durrani coin from Bhakkar.
 - K. W. WIGGINS & S. GARG: A rupee of Suba Awadh in the name of Bahadur Shah issued in 1857.
 - S. K. PUNSHI: A silver coin of Puppet Muhammad Akbar Shah.
 - A. H. SIDDIQUI: Copper seal of Maharathi Asvaghosa.

This volume is available from the Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, P O Anjaneri, Dist. Nasik, Maharashtra 422213, India.

3. Metallurgy in Numismatics, Volume 2, edited by W. A. Oddy (RNS Special Publication no.19) is due for publication on 18 July 1988, price £18 to non-RNS members. Volume 1 is also available at £10. Both volumes can be ordered from Spink & Son Ltd. (Book Dept.), 5 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QS. Postage: UK £2, overseas £4 for each copy or set. If not paying in £ sterling, the equivalent of £3 to cover bank conversion charges should be added. Volume 2 contains most of the papers read at a symposium held in 1984 with the theme of scientific techniques in numismatics AD 500-1500. Topics covered include Aksumite gold and silver, Byzantine gold, Anglo-Saxon sceattas, early mediaeval coinage of Norway, Bohemian pennies, coinage of Venice, mediaeval reckoning counters, Islamic silver coins from some eastern mints etc.
4. A new book entitled "The Art & Craft of Coin Making" by D R Cooper (late of the Royal Mint and of Minting Equipment Ltd) is to be published by Spink & Son Ltd., to whom enquiries should be addressed.
5. Two recent reprints of numismatic books in India:
 - i. The Coins of Haidar Ali & Tipu Sultan by J R Henderson has been reprinted by R K Publishers, Delhi and distributed by D K Publishers' Distributors, 1 Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi - 110002. Price Rs.160.
 - ii. Catalogue of the Provincial Coin Cabinet Assam by A W Botham, has been reprinted by Eastern Book House, Patliputra Path, Rajendra Nagar, Patna-16, at Rs.350.
6. Some recent publications of potential interest to collectors of Indian coins:
 - i. Muslim Rule in Kashmir (1554AD to 1586AD) by Dr. Nizam-ud-din Wani (1987, New Delhi, Rs. 150. Available from Indian Books Centre, 40/5 Shakti Nagar, Delhi-110007, India.)
 - ii. Mughal Economy - Organization & Working by Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, 1987, Calcutta, Rs.200.
 - iii. Political History of Tripura by Dr. Ramanimohan Sarma, 1986, Calcutta, Rs.45.

Book Review

NUMISMATICA DE CEUTA MUSULMANA by J. J. R. Lorente & T. ibn H. Ibrahim.

Madrid, 1987, paperback, pp.202 incl. 20 plates. In Spanish with English and Arabic introductions. Distributed by Editorial Vico & Segarra, Lope de Rueda 8, 28009 MADRID. Price not stated.

This interesting and unusual book sets out to bring together as much as possible of our present knowledge of Islamic Sabtah (Ceuta in present-day Morocco). Although half the book is taken up with a catalogue of coins it is not intended to be a corpus and full details of weight, diameter, and location are sometimes omitted. It nevertheless gives a fairly complete coverage of the coins minted in Sabtah between AH400 and 800.

For many readers with access only to secondary sources, a valuable feature will be the use made of material from Arabic texts. The description of mediaeval Sabtah is taken from al-Ansari (AH 825) and the chronological list of events in Sabtah is based on named Arabic source documents. Even the three maps provide information otherwise difficult to come by, as they show not only the location of Sabtah but also the main place names near and within the town. The list of dynasties and rulers connected with Sabtah includes some often omitted from numismatic works such as the Rustamids and the Banu Atiyya, who ruled in Fes from 378 to 460, and notes the various sources from which the information is derived.

A total of 224 coins from, or attributable to, Sabtah (135 of them illustrated) are described in detail with references to published or national collections. To this is appended a further 25 rare or unpublished pieces from North Africa, all of which are illustrated. On the plates, coins are shown at various, unspecified, scales and to a sufficient, if not excellent, quality. The Sabtah coins begin in 402 and some half of the entries are concerned with the next 36 years. This period is not dealt with in Hazard, the most accessible reference for mediaeval North Africa, where an arbitrary start date is taken, and it is useful to be able to compare the issues before and after AH 439.

The main references are to Vives and Prieto but coins in the Museo Arqueologico Nacional, Madrid and the American Numismatic Society collections are included together with a few items from recent auction sales. Hazard references before AH 464 are omitted but are then given regularly, perhaps suggesting a change in authorship at this point.

The appendix, although interesting in itself, is not an obvious component of the main body of text. It includes some unpublished dinars from Tilimsan and Qayrawan, an Arab-Byzantine solidus dated Indiction XIII and AH 96 (with the V inverted), and a dinar of William of Sicily from Mahdiya dated 549.

Overall, this book is a very worthwhile addition to the library of anyone interested in the coins of North Africa even if, like your reviewer, your Spanish is a little rusty.

MRB

Two Rare Silver Fractional Dirhems — Raymond J. Hébert

May I call your attention to two silver mintless dateless fractional dirhems found by the author in Teheran, Iran in the early 1960s, and now part of the National Numismatic Collection of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Although both pieces are published, they are rare, and there may be some value in noting them, with indications, here.

Piece number 1 was published by G. C. Miles in his *Rare Islamic Coins* (1950) as number 230 and bears the name of the governor Yahyà b. al-Rabi^c. Miles wrote "Fractional dirhems are rare, and the absence of mint and date is extraordinary". He placed it where he did "because of its similarity in style to coins issued during al-Mahdi's rule. It must, at all events, be datable in the second century of the Hijrah." The piece weighs 0.425 grams.

لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريك له



محمد رسول
الله مما امر به
الامير يحيى
بن الربيع
بخ

Piece number 2 was also published by Miles (RIC) as number 309 and is dated by him "at the end of the third century of the Hijrah because of the style of the epigraphy. It might date anywhere from the middle third to the early fourth century." The piece weighs 0.836 grams and was formerly ringed.

لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريك له



محمد
رسول
الله

Margin: Qur'an XXX, 3-4

له الامر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ
يفرح المؤمن

Qur'an IX, 33

محمد رسول الله ارسله بالهدى ودين
الحق ليظهره على الدين

The legend in the obverse fields of numbers 1 and 2 can be translated as "There is no God except God. He is alone. (There is) no partner to Him". The legend in the reverse field of number 2 translates as "Muhammad is the Messenger of God". The legend in the reverse field of number 1 translates as "Muhammad is the Messenger of God; Of (or among) those things ordered by the amir (lord, prince, chief, commander) Yahyà son of al-Rabi^c; Bravo (Good)!" Qur'anic Sura 30:3-4 translates as "Of God is the Command from before (man existed) and from after (man shall cease to exist), and on that day the believers shall rejoice in the victory of God." while Qur'anic Sura 9:3 translates as "Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with the Guidance and a religion of the truth in order that he might cause it to be bright over the (already-existing) religion, all of it, although polytheists disliked (it.)"

In 1950, when Miles wrote his remarks, he said that he "had not been able to identify the governor, Yahya b. al-Rabi^c; his name does not appear in the early chronicles." To the best of my knowledge, this is still true.

Concerning the lower field of number 2, there *may* be a name there. I have shown the piece to a Canadian Orientalist of Syrian extraction who agrees. The name *may* be Nuh bin Mansur. If so, the piece is not 'Abbasid, but should be attributed to the Samanids and to Nuh II b. Mansur, 976-997AD/366-387 AH. Perhaps one of our readers has a better preserved piece and can confirm this reading.



1. Ralsa AH 91. (مجلسه سنه اثنى عشر) 2.60 grams, 28mm.

Hitherto coins from the mint of Ralsa were known only for AH 90. The present coin provides a second date. The location of this mint is still unidentified. The present coin was found in Fars province in 1984.



2. Manadhir AH 79 (بمادير سنه سبع و سبعين) 2.80 grams, 26mm.

Manadhir is a well known mint in Khuzistan province. To date, thirteen dates have been published for this mint, viz. AH 80, 81, 83, 84, 90-98. The present coin provides a new and earliest date.

In Newsletter 106 Ken Wiggins and I published two coins which we attributed to Muhammad Akbar II during his puppetary period and struck at Hardwar. This item led to lengthy correspondence between the authors and Dr. P. L. Gupta and Sanjay Garg in Nasik. The latter cast doubts on the authors' attributions and summarise the viewpoints in the article that follows. Other members are invited to put forward their views.

Coins of Moghal Puppet King Akbar Shah P. L. Gupta and Sanjay Garg

For a long time it was believed that there existed only one claimant to the Moghal throne, named Bedar Bakht, during the reign of Shah Alam II. Then later, coins came to light that disclosed that another prince was also claimant to the Moghal throne in the same period. Researches made during recent years at the Indian Institute in Numismatic Studies (Anjaneri, Nasik) by one of us (Sanjay Garg) revealed that these princes were never true claimants to the Moghal throne. They were merely children and were forcibly installed as Moghal kings by the Rohilla chief Ghulam Qadir to meet his own interests, in one and the same year 1203 A.H. The former (Bedar Bakht) was installed first at Shahjahanabad; and the latter (Akbar Shah) later at Saharanpur, the stronghold of the Rohilla chief, when circumstances had led him to flee from Shahjahanabad (Delhi). We now know from documentary sources that the precise date of Akbar Shah's installation to kingship at Saharanpur was on 11 Muharram 1203 A.H. His imperial status came to an end on 20 Rabi I, 1203 A.H., when Ghulam Qadir was captured by the Marathas and killed.

During these 69 or 70 days of the puppetary regime of Akbar Shah some silver and copper coins were issued in his name from Saharanpur. The silver coins had the following couplet:—

سکه زد در جهان ز فضل اله
حامی دین محمد اکبر شاه

*Sikka zad dar jahan zi fazl allah
Hami din Muhammad Akbar Shah*

Besides the silver and copper coins of Saharanpur issued in the name of the puppet Akbar Shah, R.B. Whitehead published a silver and a copper coin of Shahjahanabad mint and attributed them to Akbar Shah, whom he had called claimant to the Moghal throne. But any possibility of such an issue from Shahjahanabad may conveniently be ruled out in view of the facts that (i) Ghulam Qadir had fled from Delhi along with a number of Moghal princes on October 12, 1788; (ii) Akbar Shah was installed as puppet ruler on October 15, 1788; (iii) the Marathas had re-installed Shah Alam II on the Delhi throne on October 17, 1788; (iv) Delhi was entirely under the control of the Marathas, the great enemies of Ghulam Qadir. There would have been no-one at Shahjahanabad to favour Ghulam Qadir and his puppet king Akbar Shah and issue any coin within this short period. It could, however, be argued that the coin was minted at Saharanpur with the name of Shahjahanabad to fortify the claim of Akbar Shah over the Moghal kingdom (or empire). This could well have been accepted, had the coin favoured it.

The coin bears only the figures 22 of the date at the extreme left of the last line of the obverse legend. The first 2 is truncated and no dot can be seen between the two 2s. Whitehead assumed the presence of such a dot and read the date on the coin as 1202. Even if his surmise is accepted, whatever value it might have had for history, when almost nothing was known about Akbar Shah, is today rendered worthless. Akbar Shah had no kingly status at this date. It may now well be said without any hesitation that the coin is dated [12] 22, the year when Akbar Shah was on the throne by his own right as the successor of his father Shah Alam II.

Thus there is nothing in the coin to place it in the puppetary period of Akbar Shah. But at the same time, it retains its importance for another reason. It now shows that the couplet, which hitherto had been thought exclusive to the coins of the puppetary period of Akbar Shah, was used also at the beginning of his legitimate reign, in 1222 A.H. Perhaps it was for this very reason that the author of the *Mukhtasar-i-siyar-i-Hind* mentioned the couplet as meant for the coins of Akbar II.

Whitehead did not illustrate the copper coin that he attributed to the puppet Akbar Shah. Most likely, this very coin now exists in the British Museum. S. Goron has kindly provided us with its photograph. Whitehead himself was not sure of the date on the coin. We also are unable to determine its date. We hold the opinion that any coin with any doubtful date cannot be cited as evidence for the determination of its period without any supporting evidence. The symbol of a fish, as seen on this

coin, is not seen on any imperial Moghal coin of any mint at any period. It was used only on the coins that were issued by others in the name of the Moghal Emperor Shah Alam II. Even the mint name Shahjahanabad did not remain exclusive for the mint at Delhi during the time of Shah Alam II. This coin could well be of the same quasi-Moghal type with the name Shahjahanabad and the fish symbol. In our opinion no importance can be attached to this coin in the context of the coinage of the puppet Akbar Shah.

S. Goron and K. W. Wiggins have jointly published a Note in the *ONS Newsletter* No. 106 (May-June 1987), wherein they have published a silver and a copper coin and have attributed them as the issue of Hardwar mint in the name of Akbar Shah during his puppetary reign.

The silver coin bears on the obverse the same couplet that was used on the coins of Akbar Shah, issued from Saharanpur during his puppetary period. The same couplet was also used on the silver coins of Shahjahanabad, that we have just re-attributed to the very beginning of his legitimate reign as Akbar II. Thus the couplet by itself is of no help in attributing the coin to either of the two periods. The date too, that could have helped in its proper attribution, is of no avail. Only the unit figure 3 of the date is on the coin at the extreme left edge of the obverse near the second line. The first three digits are off the flan. They may well be assumed to have been either 120 or 122. In the first case the date would be 1203; and the coin could then be placed in the puppetary period as Goron and Wiggins have assumed. In the second case, the date would be 1223; the coin would then relate to the beginning of the legitimate reign. In this latter case there is a *prima facie* difficulty in that the Hijri year does not correspond with the regnal year *Ahd*. But this may conveniently be overlooked. The mismatching of the two dates is no unknown phenomenon in later Moghal numismatics. As it is, we have no decisive score over one or the other attribution of the period.

We have just seen above that there is no evidence so far to show that any coin was issued in the name of Akbar Shah from any place other than Saharanpur. The Rohilla chief Ghulam Qadir could well have issued coins of Akbar Shah in the name of Shahjahanabad from his own place Saharanpur, if for nothing else but to pretend that his hold extended over the Moghal capital and to express the suzerainty of his puppet over the Moghal empire. But he did not do so. And that being the case how can we expect that he would have issued any coin of Hardwar or anywhere else? Merely the closeness of Hardwar to Saharanpur or its being a Hindu pilgrimage centre would certainly not have prompted Ghulam Qadir to do so, particularly in view of the situation he then found himself in and the fact that his puppet, Akbar Shah, held no regal respect amongst the masses outside the walls of Saharanpur. There would need to have been some dire necessity, politically motivated, to issue any such coin. There could have been a remote possibility of such an issue, had Hardwar been a flourishing Moghal mint, working from earlier times and regularly issuing coins. No such mint is known to have existed there at any time. We do know of a mint there during the time of Shah Alam II from three silver coins dated 1205, 1212 and 1214 (LMC 5188; PMC 5161-62). They all are the issues of the period when Ghulam Qadir was no more of this world and Akbar Shah was no more his puppet king; the territory was in the control of the Marathas, who had every reason to issue coins from *Tirath Hardwar*. It is, therefore, inconceivable that any coin in the name of the puppet king Akbar Shah would have been issued from Hardwar.

The coin itself does not bear any testimony that it was issued at Hardwar. The top line of the reverse, having the mint-name is badly truncated. As far as we are concerned, we have not been able to make any sense out of it. We would have preferred to wait for a better specimen than to hazard any speculation. But Goron and Wiggins have read it as Hareedwar (with a long *i* sound represented by the letter *ye* (ع)). What has been taken by them as the letter *ye* (ع) does not appear to us to be a letter *ye* (ع). No matter whether the writing be neat, crude or very crude, no letter would deviate from its basic characteristics. The letter *ye* (ع) always begins from the right hand side and goes down in a circular form with thick body and then moves up from a curve to the left side and ends in a thin, pointed tip. A careful observation of the letter on the coin reveals that the letter has just the opposite form. It begins at the left hand side, goes down in a circular form and goes up to the right to end in a thin, pointed line. This kind of formation is known only for the letters *Ain* (ع), *Ghain* (غ), *Jim* (ج), *Che* (چ), *he* (ح), and *khe* (خ). Any of these letters might have been included in the name of the mint, but not the *ye* (ع). If this fact is properly realised, it would be itself enough to negate the identification of the mint-name as *Hareedwar*.

If by any reason, it is insisted that the letter is nothing else but *ye* (ع), even then, the mint-name on the coin would not be Hardwar. In this case, the fact that needs to be realised is that the town that the authors have in mind, is a sacred Hindu pilgrimage place, and is known either as Hardwar (the gate-way to Hara-Siva) as the pilgrims go from here to the famous shrine of Siva, known as Kedarnath, situated in the Himalayas; or as *Haridwar*, the gateway to Hari (Vishnu), as the pilgrims also go from here to the Vishnu temple known as Badarinath, also situated in the Himalayas. In writing in Nagari and other Indian scripts, the two names are written differently. In the first case no medial vowel is needed; in the case of the latter, a medial vowel sign for *i* (short *i*) is attached to the letter *ra*. But in writing the names in Persian no such distinction is generally made. It is always written as *Hardwar*. Sometimes cautious scribes do use a sign below *re* to express *i*, but never use the letter *ye* (ع) or its sign. Nowhere in any chronicle or document, old or contemporary, is the name written with the vowel *ye*, which is meant only to express the long sound of *i*. Still, if it is insisted that Hardwar may be spelt as Hareedwar (with long *i* and the letter *ye* may be used for it) and instances are cited where the mint-names on Moghal coins are seen spelt in more than one way (Etawa: Etawah; Bakhar: Bhakhar; Surat - with *swad* or *sin*). It has to be borne in mind that while these and some other names do have different spellings they are always pronounced in one and the same way. Here it is not just a case of two spellings but of pronouncing the name. Hardwar and Hareedwar (written with the letter *ye*) would never be pronounced in one and the same way. They would always be pronounced differently. The argument that the coin might have been engraved by a person, who did not know how to spell the name in Persian, also holds no validity. It is a matter of common knowledge that one writes what one hears constantly. Even a rustic hears Hardwar and never Hareedwar (with long *i*). Human psychology is to omit a word or letter rather than to add one. This can well be realised in the spellings of English words, where a letter or two are written but never pronounced. It should also be realised that Hari (written with a long vowel *i*) means 'monkey', whereas here in the name it means God - Hara or Hari (with short vowel *i*). No one in India would dare to write the name in that way. We are, therefore, convinced that the mint-name Hardwar would never have been written the way that Goron and Wiggins have tried to see it. The mint-name must be something else. Let us wait for a better specimen with a full mint-name.

Now coming to the copper coin that Goron and Wiggins have placed in the puppetary period of Akbar Shah, we do not say that it does not relate to Akbar Shah or that the mint-name is not Hardwar. Our contention is only that the coin does not belong to his puppetary period. We have convincingly demonstrated above that no mint existed at Hardwar during the puppetary period of Akbar Shah. This fact by itself makes it clear that this coin would not have been issued in the puppetary period. Since Goron and Wiggins' contention is based on the interpretation of the date available on the coin, it would be better in all fairness, to examine it. The date, which is placed just below the name *Akbar* is taken by them as 1203; and according to them the first three digits - 120 are placed on the left side of the tail of the letter *re* of Akbar and the fourth digit 3 is on its right and is truncated. There is no denying that the dates on some of the coins of Aurangzeb and his successors are found divided into two parts and separated by the lower part of some letter of the legend. Normally on such coins

the four digits are divided evenly, two digits on one side of the letter and the other two digits on the other. There are some exceptions, however, where three digits are seen on one side and the remaining one on the other. The authors place the coin in this exceptional category. In doing so, they have failed to realise that what they have assumed as the zero of the date is in fact the *nuqta* (dot) of the letter *be* of the name *Akbar*. We know of no instance where the letter *be* of *Akbar* is written on coins without the *nuqta* beneath it. It would be ridiculous to think that the *nuqta* on this coin, served a dual purpose - the *nuqta* of *be* as well as the zero sign. It is thus self apparent that the digits of the date on the left are only two - 12 and not 120. The other two digits were on the right side, of which only one, the third one, is available on the coin and the fourth one is off the flan. The available third digit is clearly a 2 and not the truncated 3 as is thought by the authors. There is nothing on the coin to presume that the right curve of the figure 3 is off the flan. A careful examination of the coin would show that on the left top side of the coin the word  (*Shahi*) is truncated;  (*Sha*) and the entire letter *he* (*he*) are missing. Keeping this fact in view, it is clear that the die was much bigger than the flan of the coin; and the missing part of the die on the right is no less great than what is missing on the left, and would contain the figure 1 or 2. Thus the coin had the date 1221 or 1222, the first regnal year of Akbar II.

Thus both the silver and copper coins relate only to the period of Akbar II and not of the puppet king Akbar Shah. There is nothing to say that any coin, silver or copper, was issued in the puppetary period of Akbar Shah from any place other than Saharanpur.

A Puzzling Gold Coin – A reply Prashant P Kulkarni

On reading about a puzzling gold coin of Malwa in Newsletter no. 111, I found that there was no real puzzle involved. The coin is beautiful, with perfect calligraphy and fabric, and beyond doubt a genuine piece. If we compare this piece with the 5 tanka of the same ruler Mahmud I of Malwa (published in *JNSI* xxxvii, pp.117ff), we find the same cartouche and style of writing. The only trouble with the present tanka is that it bears an ill-formed 4 of the date 848. We should not read it as 2 because in that case the horizontal stroke of *4* would be too wide in comparison with the 8. It is preferable to read it as 848. The coin is rare and I have seen only two more such specimens in the important collections of Malwa Sultan coins in India. I present here photographs of one of them bearing the date 870. It weighs about 11 gms. The dates of these coins 848, 868 (on the five tanka) and 870 AH show that these ornamental specimens were struck over a long period of time.



Editor's comments: I wonder whether PPK is correct in reading the second digit as 4. The dates of the other coins mentioned suggest that a mirror-image 6 may be more plausible. It is worth mentioning here that Edward Thomas published an identical coin of year 870 in his 'Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli' (first published London 1871).

Coins of hitherto unknown ruler Vigra from Paithan by Prashant P. Kulkarni

When in Paithan some time ago I came across two copper coins resembling those of the Sebaka rulers. They depict the name of a new ruler Vigra and are published here.

1. Copper-brass, 29 x 23mm, 14.25 gms.



Obverse: Bull walking to right. (Worn, on the coin)
Brahmi legend *Raño Vigasa* above the bull. Triangle-headed standard below the word *Raño*.

Reverse: A *Srivatsa* symbol standing on concentric circles along with a *triratna* symbol to the right having smaller circles.

2. Copper, 19 x 16mm, 6.20 gms.



Obverse: As coin no. 1.

Reverse: A *triratna* symbol, above it a triangle-headed standard flanked by small *svastikas*. To the right is a tree in railing. Both above concentric circles.

The legend *Raño Vigasa* means '(the coin) of King Viga'; it is very likely that the full name of the ruler was Vigraha though it is strange that the letter *ha* is not engraved at all. The absence of the letter *ra* is well justified as the legend is in prakrit where *ra* following a consonant is generally dropped. Viga also means strong, vigorous, intelligent. And therefore the name of the ruler can even be Viga.

It is presumed that the Sebaka rulers existed in 3rd - 1st centuries BC.¹ As the coins published here resemble closely those of the Sebaka rulers, both kings could be contemporary.

I have come across several Sebaka coins from the Paithan area of Western Maharashtra and it is clear that Sebaka as well as Viga ruled there before the Satavahanas; i.e. before the first century BC. On palaeographic grounds, it appears that the ruler Viga was either contemporary with Sebaka or that he immediately succeeded the latter during the 3rd - 2nd centuries BC.

I am grateful to Prof. A. M. Shastri for going through this article and making certain suggestions.

1. R. K. Sethi, "New Coins of Sebaka", *Numismatic Digest* I, Part II, pp.10-16.

A half mohur of Kotah State

Bill Warden has sent details of a ½ mohur of Kotah of the "Shah-i-Zaman Inglistan" type, i.e. referring to Queen Victoria. Mohurs of this type are known and can be found listed on p.206 of the South Asian Catalogue. This seems to be the first ½ mohur of this type to be published. It bears the regnal year 42. The type of coin was struck from AD 1857, with year 1 presumably = 1857. On that basis, yr 42 would be AD 1898, and would fall within the reign of Umed Singh (AD1889-1945). The coin weighs 5.48 gms.

Obv.



ملکہ معظمہ انگلستان بادشاہ زمان

Malikah mu'azzamah Inglistan badshah zaman.

Her Majesty of England, monarch of the age.

Rev.



ضرب کوٹہ سہ ۴۲ جلوس
میمنت مانوس

Zarb Kotah sanah 42 julus maimanat manus

Struck at Kotah in year 42 of the fortunate reign.

CHINA - The machine minted T'ung Chih cash coin of 1866 by Richard Wright



The Imperial Chinese authorities showed little sign of interest in the machine minting of coins until the 1880s. Therefore the fact that the Paris Mint struck a pattern Chekiang Province cash coin as early as 1866 is somewhat of an enigma, particularly as the Mint officials there have no evidence or knowledge of any further French involvement with the Chinese coinage. The coin, which is illustrated by a tracing taken from the example in the recently published catalogue of the collection of the Paris Mint, is described therein as a *Sapeque Chine*, a round hole pattern produced by M. Barre in 1866, struck in brass, weight 1.42g and diameter 20mm. Only three pieces are known to exist. (In another source, the *Revue Belge Numismatique*, 1869 (ref 1), the weight was given as 1.48g, and the date confirmed as 1866). In the Paris Mint catalogue the dies are also shown, for some reason marked 1870, which was possibly the date of acquisition. The confusion in dates, and the lack of positive information about the coins, is probably due to the fact that at that stage dies and patterns prepared for foreigners are quoted as remaining the property of the engraver, until such time as an order had been placed.

Which leaves the question: why were the dies prepared and three coins struck? Or were there more coins?

The answer probably lies with the Pin Mission, a mini-saga written up and described a couple of decades ago (ref 2), but which has been seemingly ignored in a possible numismatic context. Up until the 19th century the Imperial Chinese government, content with its lot and deeming the rest of the world to be barbarians, had done its best to keep the western world at arm's length. Official missions from Britain in 1793 and 1816 failed to break the ice; the Russians and the Dutch fared no better; yet trade continued and provoked the China Wars of the forties and fifties which effectively opened up China to trade on western terms. It was not until 1876 that the first Chinese Legation was established in London, and a further twenty years before a major Chinese statesman, Li Hung-chang, made an official tour of Europe and the United States, incidentally generating some interesting numismatic and medallic items.

Prior to 1876 any visits by Chinese officials or mandarins to the western world were limited and low key. Language was a problem. The enigmatic Hsing, a Mandarin of the Fifth grade, is a case in point. In his forties and a native of Canton, he made the passage from China in the *Keying* apparently in the role of a tourist. He spoke little English, but succeeded in joining the official procession marking the opening of the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, and is still remembered today by his portrait on one of the *Keying* medallions. It was Mr (later Sir) Robert Hart, the Inspector-General of the Chinese Customs, who in 1866 prompted the first semi-official visit of a mandarin to Europe. He was returning to his native Ireland

on leave, was concerned that the Chinese government had been doing nothing to bring itself up to date with the western world, and proposed that a mandarin should accompany him to Europe and report all he saw. Hart's proposal was adopted, but he was only partially successful as the mandarin selected for the task, Pin Ch'un or Pin-tu-jen, the Chinese Secretary of the Imperial Maritime Customs, was of low rank, albeit hastily promoted up to the Third grade, elderly, bigoted, and, even worse, was given no official status. However, Pin was accompanied by his son, and three language students, and it was probably the young generation, from their experience, who provided the greatest benefit to China in the long run. Pin was ably escorted by Edward Bowra, and M. de Longchamps; the party landed in Marseilles, and thereafter these mentors arranged the intensive programmes of tours of factories and institutes; only to discover in Paris that their Mandarin had quickly developed a preference for the theatre and the circus. Thus it was that Pin Ch'un declared himself indisposed on 12th May 1866, and refused to carry out the plan for that day - although his entourage did - which included visits to the Library, the Post Office, the Telegraph Office and *the Paris Mint*.

Now, this projected visit does provide a very good reason for the existence of the machine minted Chekiang Province cash coin in the Paris Mint in 1866: e.g. it was only a specimen coin, produced solely for the Mandarin's visit. Why would Chekiang have been selected for this example? It is pure conjecture, but the mandarin *may* have been a native of that province, and M. de Longchamps *could* have conveyed that information to the Mint when making the arrangements for the visit. It is possible, of course, that a few specimens were handed out to the entourage, and may have found their way back to China.

The story does not stop there. In due course the Mission crossed over to England, and on 8th/9th June 1866 a grumbling Mandarin was escorted on an intensive tour of Birmingham's industries. History does not relate at the moment whether or not he visited the Heaton Mint, and the date is unfortunately too early for the Mint's records, but given time this point can be resolved; and it seems unlikely that a visit to the Mint should be omitted, particularly as amongst the Mint's and Museum's bits and pieces there is one 'mystery' which is ready-made to be linked to a Chinese visit in 1866. Then from England Pin went on a whistle-stop tour of North Europe, visiting in quick succession The Hague, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsingfors, St Petersburg, Koenigsberg, Berlin and Essen during the summer of 1866; and it is a possibility that some previously unconsidered trifle could have been prepared for him at one or more of these cities.

This Mission, related in brief, hopefully throws some more light on the numismatic scene. Pin Ch'un returned home via Hong Kong in October 1866, having unfortunately ended up with a low opinion of foreigners, a fact which was probably reflected in his report.

Acknowledgement. My thanks are due, as always, to Joe Cribb of the British Museum, for information and considered opinion.

References:

1. Spink's *Numismatic Circular*, January 1976, 'China's First Die-Struck Coin', A. Th. Arber-Cooke.
2. *Servants of the Dragon Throne*, Charles Drage, UK 1966, Chapter XI, 'The Mission of the Third Class Mandarin'.

Netherlands Indies: an unpublished pattern 25 cent 1940 S. Nitidihardjo

The 25 cent 1940 Netherlands Indies illustrated in the enlarged photograph below appears to be unpublished.

I acquired it from someone whose father was a retired employee of the Exchequer at Jakarta from the colonial period. According to him, he was told at his father's death (1963?) that many sacks of the same coins were shipped for Australia. The origin of this piece is puzzling. It is made of cupro-nickel, and is similar in size to the 5 cent Netherlands Antilles. The piece seems to be an example of the first trials or patterns which must have been presented to some officials for approval. Presumably they were struck in Batavia (now Jakarta) in a period of world turmoil between 1937 and 1940.

Literature on Netherlands Indies numismatics does not mention new types of nickel coins being produced in those years. However, Bucknill, in his book *The coins of the Dutch East Indies* commented that "no official minting of coinage by the Dutch has taken place in Netherlands Indies during Queen Wilhelmina's reign".

No source of other information on this matter can be found. If anyone has any definite information I would be interested to hear of it.

