

# ONS



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### ONS NEWS

#### Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting will take place at the Department of Coins and Medals British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG at 11.00 am on Saturday 4 October 2014. The Annual General Meeting will be followed by talks on numismatic topics. Details of the AGM agenda and speakers will be available on the Society's website and Facebook page and circulated by email before the meeting to UK members nearer to the date of the meeting.

#### Oxford

On 17 May the Ashmolean Museum hosted the ONS for a seminar on Metallurgical Analysis of coins. The event was a very well attended by members and Shailendra Bhandare organised the speakers and venue. Most of these talks related to work that had been done at the Ashmolean using X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) machines supplied by Bruker UK Ltd.

The first talk was by Mike Dobby of Bruker UK Ltd who spoke about "The Use of X-Rays in the Examination of Coins". He gave an overview of the physics that underpin XRF and the types of machines that are available, the possibilities and limitations of the technique. This was then followed by a demonstration for the members present of a machine using a sample of coins.

The second and fourth talks by Paul Stevens and Simon Glenn respectively were about tests they had carried out at the Ashmolean. Paul explained the procedure he had followed and looked particularly at tests he had carried out on East India Company coins and the coins of the Tughluqs and Durrani. One of the uses found for the technique was the ability to detect thinly plated forgeries. Simon Glenn showed similar examples where the metal composition of forgeries differed by a very wide margin from authentic coins. Paul's talk showed that the silver content of the 'Bombay rupee' was very consistent and that the change in standard to equalise the issues of Surat and Bombay in 1800 was detectable in the coins themselves.

Paul then showed that not all official productions were consistent in their silver content. Coins made by melting down Spanish Mexican dollars at Madras showed a wide range of silver content (85% to 95%) and the 'tin' coins of Bombay were not in fact tin after 1717 but zinc. Finally Paul mentioned that he had analysed a range of Durrani and Barakzai rupees issued from Kabul to see whether there had been a reduction in silver content over the years. For most of the period the silver content turned out to be quite constant, only in the latter years was some reduction noted.

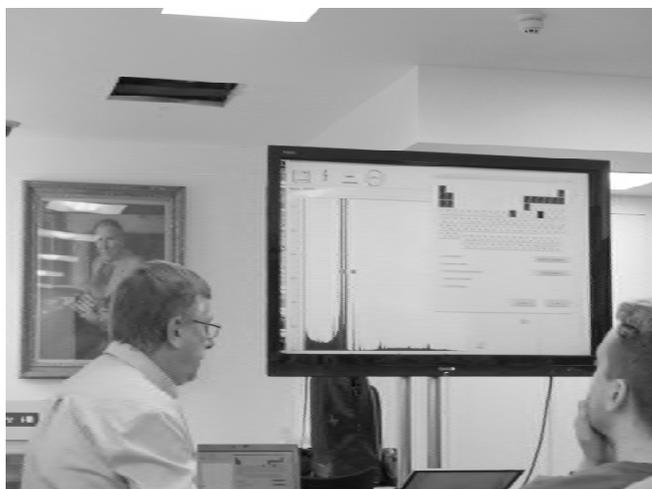
Simon Glenn's talk 'XRF Analysis of the Ashmolean Collection of Graeco-Bactrian Coins' looked at the content of Bactrian Greek coins. This was part of his work on a die study of the coins which he had previously presented at ONS meetings. Simon's talk included an over-view of the difficulties for a

historian in interpreting the results from scientific analysis and some of the various problems that analysis has raised in the study of Bactrian Greek coins. Particularly he spoke about the use of nickel in the coins and the possibility that traces of bismuth might be associated with the working of the Panjhir mines in antiquity.

The third talk was given by Robert Bracey on the problems of interpreting analytic data and focused on the so-called Alexander Medallion, the authenticity of which is disputed. During the day there were a series of lively question and answer sessions with the different speakers.



*Shailendra Bhandare introducing the seminar*



*Mike Dobby of Bruker Ltd (left) seeing the results of one of the scans*



*Paul Stevens showing the results of scans of East India Company silver coinage and explaining how the analysis was able to detect forgeries*



*Robert Bracey in action*



*Simon Glenn during his talk on the analysis of Graeco-Bactrian coins in the Ashmolean collection*

### **Mumbai**

Members of ONS South Asia held their first meeting of 2014 at Parsi Gymkhana, Mumbai on the evening of 28 June 2014. The meeting saw three paper presentations made by new ONS Members; Dr. Kurush F. Dalal, an archaeologist excavating in Western India for about a decade, elaborated on 'Early Medieval Coins found in Excavations in Western India', Suken Shah raised various research questions related to the Sarvva Coin series. Mahesh Kalra presented his paper 'The Birth of the 'New' Bombay

Mint - c. 1790-c. 1830 Matthew Boulton's Contribution to the Modernization of Indian Coinage'.

The meeting was attended by some 35 members and also resulted in the enrolment of 10 new members at the venue taking up the count of ONS-SA Membership to 110. The meeting was possible thanks to the hospitality of veteran numismatist and ex-Regional Secretary, ONS-SA, Farokh Todywalla. A mention must be made of the efforts of ONS-SA volunteers, Bhavna Khanna and Milind Vora as well as the enthusiasm of the gathered members who discussed each paper's finer points in great detail. Some photos taken at the event follow.



*Mahesh Kalra introducing Dr Kurush Dalal*

### **ONS meeting Bremen**

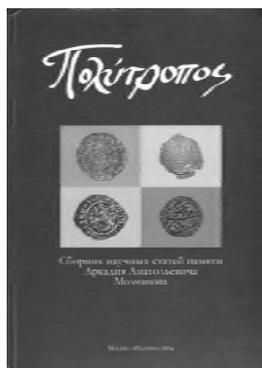
This year's ONS meeting in Bremen will take place on 8 November 2014, in the lecture room of Ortsamt West, Waller Heerstr. 99 (3. Etage), 28217 Bremen, commencing 11 a.m. The meeting is being organized by Dr Lutz Ilisch (Tübingen) and Christian Bruennlein, and will be hosted by the Bremer Numismatische Gesellschaft. Everyone interested in Islamic numismatics is welcome. As well as a number of talks, there will be the opportunity to exchange coins or to have uncertain coins identified by guests and professionals. A dinner will also be arranged. For more information please contact:

[Redacted contact information]



location with accession numbers. These have again been divided into two parts: 117 are enlisted as Kalighat coins and 11 are coins of other types that the author believes also formed part of the hoard.

[See also the review, below on p 6, by Robert Bracey]



The Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Science has published a book in memory of the prominent Russian numismatist, linguist and historian, Arkady A. Molchanov – “Πολυτροπος.” A *Collection of Articles in Memory of Dr Arkady A. Molchanov (1947–2010)*. Ed. by Tatjana N. Jackson and Alexander V. Akopyan. Moscow: Indrik, 2014. 456 pp. + XIII full-colour plates. In Russian, with English / French summaries.

Arkady Molchanov was born in Moscow in 1947. He graduated from the Department of History of Moscow State University, with honours in 1970, writing a thesis "An antique sculptural portrait on the Bosphorus." Afterwards, he worked in the Department of Numismatics of the State Historical Museum. There, in 1976, under the guidance of Academician V. L. Yanin, he defended his PhD work "Signs of the property of princes in the politico-administrative and economic life in Old Russia", based mostly on numismatic and sphragistic data. Among the most important of Arkady Molchanov's works should be noted works on the history of the ancient world, Mycenaean studies and the decipherment of the Phaistos Disc. His work in this last area was represented in several monographs.

In addition to the above, he researched on genealogy (antique, old Russian and eastern), the history of the ancient world and the Middle Ages, Slavic-Russian archaeology, history of art and architecture, heraldry, symbolism, sphragistics, architectural history, history of international relations, historical geography, onomastics, epigraphy and, especially, numismatics. The list of his publications includes more than five hundred titles, and one of their names listed indicates the breadth and originality of the researcher. Numismatics were always one of his special interests. To all of its parts, from Ancient and Byzantine to European, Russian, Islamic, Indian and modern he devoted a considerable number of his works. In ancient numismatics his special interest was the coins of the Bosphoran Kingdom, issues of the Greek cities of the Northern and Western Black Sea Region - Nymphaeum, Theodosia, Nikopol in Istria, as well as coins of the Empire of Trebizond found in the Northern Black Sea. The greatest number of numismatic works of Dr Molchanov were devoted to Islamic coins. These works include descriptions of hoards and single finds of Kufic dirhams from various regions of Russia, the publication of previously unknown Islamic coins (of the Shaybanids, Safavids, Qajars); he clarified the history of various dynasties (Idrisids of Morocco, amirs of Volga Bulgaria, Ja'farids of Tiflis, Mu'tids of Ispijab) etc. Some of these articles were published in JONS/ONSN too.

The present book contains 26 articles, devoted to his various areas of interest.. The numismatical articles are: - A. V. Akopyan "Dvin in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. City history in the light of new numismatic materials," V. A. Belyaev, S. V. Sidorovich "The Tang dynasty tally of credence for the Teli tribe representative," O. L. Gabelko "Some Problems of the Pontic kings' coinage in the second century BC," E. V. Zakharov "Coins of Apameia Phrygia from the collections of The State Historical Museum and The State Museum of Fine Arts," G. V. Zlobin "Safavid coinage of Shirwān in AH 945-55 / AD 1538-49," S. A. Kovalenko "On the coin typology of Greek cities of the northern Black Sea littoral," A. N. Kozyrev "New data on the coinage of Turkestan," I. Paghava, S. Turkia "Monetary heritage of Mansūr II b. Ja'far (III). (To the numismatic history of the Tiflis Amirate)."

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Issue 10 of *Numismatique Asiatique*, the journal of the Société de Numismatique Asiatique has been published. This includes the following items:

'Ferracute goes to China', about the American company, the Ferracute Machine Company, setting up a mint in Szechuan in 1898

'La collection de monnaies japonaises de Jules Silvestre' by F. Joyaux

'Ouvrages numismatiques japonais des XVII-Xxe siècles de l'Université Waseda (Tokyo)' by C. Greenbaum

'Lettre de Hongkong: La question monétaire et le boycottage de tramways (au début du XXe siècle)

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*Numismatic Digest*, volumes 36-37 (2012-2013) has been published by IIRNS Publications Pvt. Ltd. Mumbai, India. This includes the following articles:

'A new local type of early punchmarked coins' by S. Sharma & BP Verma

'Coins and currency patterns of early historic Bengal – an overview' by SB Majumdar

'Punchmarked coins in the Rajanikanta Jnana Mandir, a rural museum in West Bengal' by S. Halder

'Coins of two unknown Pañchāla kings, Prajñāmitra and Indramitra III' by OPL Srivastava & Col. R Rawat

'A new type coin of Śivaghoshaka' by D. Handa

'Some uninscribed lead coins from Sillod and neighbouring areas' by A. Jha

'Kalighat Hoard' by S. Banik

'Use of coins terms in the epigraphs of early medieval Bengal and related issues/ by S. Ghosh

'A re-struck clay sealing of Vindhyaśakti' by A. Nath

## Other News

### *Rasmir-2014: Oriental numismatic conference*

Please note that for reasons beyond the control of the organisers, this conference has had to be postponed to a later date. The new date is 27-29 August, 2014. For more information please contact



## Book Reviews

Susmita Basu Majumdar, *Kalighat Hoard: The First Gupta Coin Hoard from India*, Miras Books, 2014: xxxiii, 79pp, 11 plates

The Kalighat hoard was found in 1783 in a pot buried on the banks of the Hooghly river near Calcutta. Most of the hoard was sent to London by Warren Hastings where it was then dispersed amongst various collections. This is the first hoard of Gupta coins for which there is any record but those records mention only its find spot, approximate size (about 200), and its distribution. This publication seeks to re-unite the coins dispersed across collections to give a complete account of the original contents.

This book has two forewords by leading numismatists, Joe Cribb and Ellen Raven. They discuss the importance of hoard in some detail. Of course, part of this is a romantic interest in the first or earliest, but as Raven illustrates in her foreword (xxvi) it is still common for hoards to be scattered and the recovery has considerable value. In fact, as we learn later only six other hoards are known from Bengal (22)

The patina on the coins, probably resulting from storage in a metal container, is discussed several times. It was this patina which made it possible to track the examples. In the main body, Majumdar first discusses the reports of the find, then Raja Nabarakrishna Deb who likely gave them to Hastings, and their distribution to various individuals, including Dr William Hunter, Sarah Sophia Banks, Richard Payne Knight, Clayton Cracherode.

A small number remained in India, at least some of which have been traced to the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Varanasi. Majumdar acknowledges the range of curators and scholars who have assisted her in providing images of these.

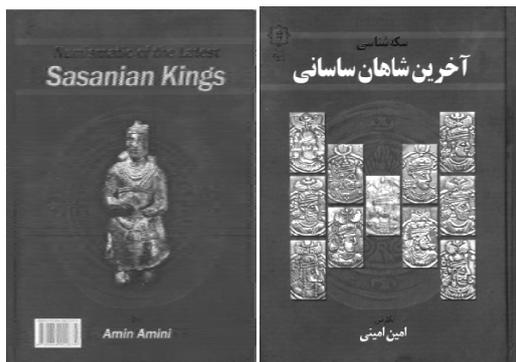
The catalogue, with images, follows. It has 117 coins from the original hoard (now in the British Museum, Fitzwilliam, Hunterian, Ashmolean, and Bharat Kala Bhavan) and 11 coins which are more doubtful but which Majumdar wishes to argue came from the hoard. The possibility that the hoard contained non-Gupta coins, the political divisions of Bengal, the evidence of Gupta rule in the region, the debasement of late gold coins, are all discussed in the final section. This is then followed by a set of plates arranging the images of the coins in chronological order.

The production quality is high, with good colour photographs throughout, it is well written, and as the forewords suggest the hoard is important. Clearly this book is an important contribution to Gupta numismatics. The text does not draw much new interpretation from the hoard and with the forewords it can feel a little repetitive, but those are minor gripes. This remains a publication of value to anyone with an interest in Gupta numismatics.

I need to place one personal correction. The reviewer is incorrectly credited with making the Gupta coins at the British Museum available online but in fact only supervised a project which was actually completed by Cam Sharp Jones, presently at the University of Kent.

Robert Bracey

Amin Amini, *Sekkeh Shenāsi Akharin Shāhān-e Sāsāni* (*Numismatic of the Latest Sasanian kings*) (Pāzineh Press, Tehran, 2012) 198pp. ISBN 978-964-9922-87-4.



Amini is well known to collectors of Sasanian coins within Iran as he is one of the most prolific writers on the series in Farsi over the last few years.<sup>1</sup> In this work he concentrates on the late Sasanian coinage from Kavād II (628) until the end of Yazdgerd III (632-651), who was the last Sasanian king. These were particularly chaotic times where, in the period from the fall of the great Sasanian king, Khusrau II (590-628) until the accession of Yazdgerd III (632), there was a succession of kings, queens and usurpers with short reigns. Historians and numismatists have difficulty in providing a definitive sequence and chronology for rulers in this period.

Amini in dealing with the coinage of the period has used the following order: Kavād II (628), Ardashīr III (628-30), Burān (630-1), Khusrau III (631-2), Hormizd VI (632-3), Azarmidokht (632-3), Khusrau IV (633), Yazdgerd III (633-52). Whilst the order of the first two kings and last is uncontroversial, differing views are held as to the rest. The current reviewer places Khusrau III somewhere in the period 629-31 and probably before Burān, who was succeeded by her sister, Azarmidokht. The coins

attributed to Khusrau IV have been variously interpreted. Finally, Hormizd VI may well have been the last ruler before Yazdgerd III.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part covers general matters concerning late Sasanian coinage. It has a useful table of date legends from 1 to 36 (page 12). Most of this part comprises an analysis of each of the mint signatures generally encountered on late Sasanian coins, including some very rarely encountered signatures such as **AMWY**, **PS** (or **PYR/PYL**), **NW** (or **WN**), **NSY** and **APAL**. Most of his attributions to the regular mint signatures are conventional and he notes differing views for a number of mint signatures. He considers whether certain mint signatures should be regarded as denoting the same place such as **AY** and **AYL** (Eranshahr Shāpūr, Susa), and **DL** and **KL** (Kirmān). Dealing with the former, the current reviewer agrees that **AY** probably denotes Erān Khurra Shāpūr, Susa in Khuzistān, but is doubtful that **AYL** represents the same location. As regards **KL**, this most probably denotes Kirmān, but the attribution of the distinct signature of **DL** should be regarded as uncertain.

The heart of the book is in Part 2, which deals with each of the rulers who struck coinage. For each ruler there is a table of recorded date and mint combinations. This is very helpful; however, the tables do not indicate which combinations are confirmed, or merely noted in other literature without being backed up by available illustrations. Thus, for example, the book lists 25 mint signatures found on Kavād II drachms, all of regnal year 2. Twenty of these signatures are confirmed; but the remaining 5 are not illustrated and so should be regarded as subject to confirmation (**AW**, **BN**, **GW**, **T** and **WYH**). Whilst the tables are useful, they are not complete in the sense that not all known combinations are listed. Thus a long list is provided for Ardashīr III, but this omits the rare signature for this ruler of **NAS** for regnal year 2 (Johnson collection).

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the book is the large number of coins illustrated, including coins very rarely encountered. Thus the existence of the mint signature **Y** for Kavād II is confirmed by an illustration. For Khusrau III (no beard) a coin of **AT** regnal year 2 is illustrated, a mint signature not recorded for this king in the main works for the series. No provenances or weights are provided for the coins illustrated, nor are they given figure numbers which would have helped for referencing.

Amini tackles the difficult issues of the various types of coin in the name of Hormizd for the late Sasanian period. The earliest type are of mint signatures **WYHC**, regnal year 1 and **WSY**, regnal year 2, which he places in the period of 600-1, that is during the reign of Khusrau II. From their style, an attribution to the early part of Khusrau II's reign is plausible. These coins are attributed to Hormizd V, but so far it has not been possible to identify any historical personality who might have issued them. The second type is a very rare coin in the name of Hormizd on the obverse, which he attributes to Farrokht-Hormizd (page 128). The mint signature on the reverse is **AM**, probably Amūl in Tabaristān. Amini reads in place of the date 'Khan sepah' (leader of the army). The third type are the regular issues of Hormizd VI all of regnal years 2 and 3, whose reign he places in 632-3 (which is later than conventionally put as 631-2). The only known issues of year 3 are with **AW**, **ST** and **WYHC**. The remaining signatures he lists which are also illustrated are of regnal year 2: **AHM**, **APL**, **AW**, **AYLAN**, **DA**, **GD**, **LD**, **MY**, **ST**, **Y**, **WH**, **WYHC**. The table for Hormizd VI omits the following noted elsewhere: **AY** 2, **BBA** 2, **HL** 2, **LAW** -, **WH** 3, **ZPL** (**GPL**) 2.

Amini's treatment of the coins attributed to Khusrau IV (with beard) is prudent. He regards those with attendants having crescent headdresses all of year 2 as being of a distinct and short reigned ruler in 633 (they may well have been struck a year or two earlier). These drachms he lists and illustrates are for **AYLAN** and **WYHC** mint signatures. However, he regards those with bonnet-type headdress for later regnal years (known for 4-10) as mules with regular reverse dies of Khusrau II drachms (page 149).

Part 3 is entitled 'Times of difficulty'. In this section there is an interesting analysis of coins with the name of Farrokhtzād. He engages with the debate found in Gyselen, *Arab Sasanian Copper Coinage*, as to whether Farrokhtzād is a personal name or attribute.

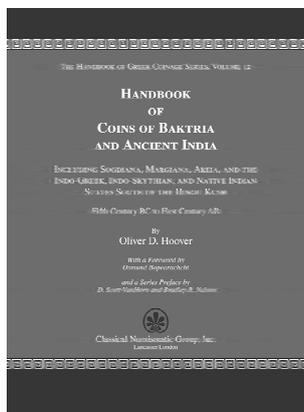
<sup>1</sup> His other works are *Tarikh va Sekkeh dar Payane Emperatoureye Sasani* [History and Coins at the end of the Sasanian Empire] (Tehran, 2008), 375 pp; *Iranian Coins, Pre-Islamic Period: the Coins of the Kazemini Museum* (Tehran, 2010), 176 pp; *Sekkeh-haye Sasani* (Sasanian Coins) (Tehran, 2010), 289 pp.

He notes that Farrokhzād is found on the margin of some Arab-Sasanian silver drachms: Muhallab b. Abī Sufra, AH 75-76h, and al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf, AH 79. He equates this name with those found on Arab-Sasanian bronze coins. These are mainly undated such as those of Ardashīr-Khurra with a *simurgh* on the reverse, Kavād-Khurra with a standing figure with a lance on the reverse, and one with an uncertain mint signature with a ram on the reverse. However, those which are dated, he reads the date as 104 (albeit other readings are possible). These dated coins all have the standard fire altar with attendants on the reverse and are known for mint signatures **GWBL** (attributed by Amin to Gūr) and **D T** (Dasht). He regards this date as being an era commencing with regnal year 1 of Khusrāu. Thus he concludes that 104 equates to AD 694 or AH 74. This places these issues the year before Farrokhzād is found on Arab-Sasanian silver drachms, spanning AH 75-79.

There is much to be found in this book which will be useful for someone seeking an introduction to late Sasanian coinage, as well as the specialist who will find interesting the illustrations of coins as well as the analysis of some difficult issues. Amini is to be commended, not least because his books on Sasanian coins are making the series much more accessible to Farsi-speaking collectors in Iran and elsewhere.

Those interested in late Sasanian coinage are fortunate that major publications in the field are coming out in a relatively short period of time. In addition to Amini's work, in 2012 the Royal Numismatic Society published V.S. Curtis, M.E. Askari, E.J. Pendleton, R. Hodges, A.A. Safi, *Sasanian Coins. A Sylloge of the Sasanian Coins in the National Museum of Iran (Muzeh Mellī Iran), Tehran, Volume 2. Khusrāu II – Yazdgard III*, RNS SP49 (London, 2012).<sup>2</sup> R. Gyselen is likely to publish in 2015 Volume 6 of the excellent *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum* series, which will cover the coins of Kavād II to Yazdgard III as well as Arab Sasanian coins.

Hodge Mehdi Malek



Oliver D. Hoover *Handbook of Coins of Bactria and Ancient India*, Classical Numismatic Group 2013; lxxxiv and 389 numbered pp. Hardbound.

This is volume 12 of the Handbook of Greek Coinage Series and covers not just Greek coins of Bactria, Gandhara, the Punjab and associated regions but imitations of those coins and also coins of their immediate successors and their contemporaries including the punch-marked coinage of India.

The book begins with a lengthy series introduction by Scott van Horn and Bradley Nelson, which I assume is the same across all books in the series. This is a very nicely written introduction to Greek coinage, basic terminology is explained clearly, and the development of Greek coinage outlined very well. It is particularly useful in this volume as, like me, many readers might approach the book with little knowledge of other Greek coinages. This is followed by an equally brief introduction to the present volume.

The main body of the book is a series of type listings subdivided into series mainly based on ruler. Each series is headed up by two short sections (rarely more than a page) on 'history' and 'coinage'. Each entry has an obverse and reverse description which begins with the legend and in which non-Greek legends are transliterated and translated. This is followed by a mint (if known, it rarely is), any reference and an estimate of the coin's rarity. Most of the listings are accompanied by an image and the standard of the images is generally high.

<sup>2</sup> Reviewed in H.M. Malek, 'Late Sasanian Coinage and the Collection in the Muzeh Mellī Iran', *NC* 173 (2013), pp.457-99.

The format is obviously dictated by the rest of the series and there are some difficulties when it is applied here. The introductory history for each king rarely consists of more than a note that the only evidence we have is the coins. And in this handbook there is obviously a risk readers will be unfamiliar with Greek, which can lead to confusion. For example, in type 316 the reverse is translated 'of Great King Straton the Just Saviour' and a reader might assume the reverse is a Prakrit translation of the Greek obverse. It is not; the obverse names Queen Agathocleia and gives her epithet instead.

The volume commences with the imitation Athenian coinage produced in Bactria and the issues associated with the name 'Sophytes' (types 1-18) then moves to the Bactrian and Indo-Greek coinages starting with the coins in the name of Diodotus and finishing with Strato III (entries 19 to 497). The final section on the Greeks is devoted to gold issues of the Indo-Greeks, separated quite sensibly to draw attention to the disputes around their authenticity.

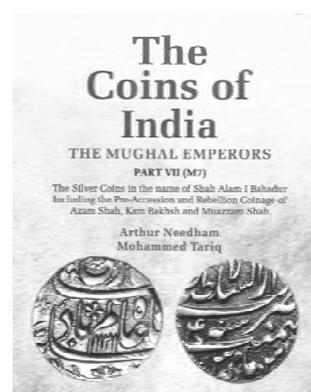
There then follows a brief section entitled 'Sogdiana' (498-521) which includes both imitation Bactrian Greek coins in Sogdiana and those coins associated with the countermarking of Parthian coins. The next major section is the 'Indo-Skythian Kings and Satraps' (522-739) which begins with Maues and passes through Vonones, Azes and associated kings, to finish with Rajavula as Satrap of Mathura. After this the catalogue passes to what it calls 'Coins of the Indian Janapadas, Cities, and Empires' (740-1110). Where the preceding sections are in basically chronological order this restarts the chronology and explores the tradition of coinage which began in the region before the arrival of the Greeks. Some of these are important because they were probably issued in part under Greek rule, particularly Gandharan issues (770-827).

The book finishes with a not very helpful index of mints (look under 'u' for 'uncertain') and much more helpful indices of Janapadas, persons, obverse and reverse types.

This handbook is primarily intended to cover the Greek coinages, and its other material exists to contextualise that. It is not going to replace existing accounts of Indian coinage and there are some oddities, Azilises being placed between Maues and Vonones rather than with the related coinage of Azes, or Oxyartes (757-758) appearing in the final section rather than at the very beginning with Sophytes. There are also omissions: no Apracharajas amongst the Indo-Scythian coinage, the Imperial Punchmarked Coinage is reduced to just three entries (962-964), and most of the Yaudheya coinage excluded. However, as an account of the Bactrian and Indo-Greek coinage it is almost complete (it would have been better to duplicate the sections from another book covering Diodotus coins with the name Antiochus) and follows a comprehensible order. Images are good and descriptions make sense. For the collector of Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins I think this will be a very useful volume, being easier to use and better illustrated than other available catalogues.

Robert Bracey

*The Coins of India. The Mughal Emperors. Part VII (M7). The Silver Coins in the name of Shah Alam I Bahadur Including the Pre-Accession and Rebellion Coinage of Azam Shah, Kam Bakhsh and Muazzam Shah*, by Arthur Needham & Muhammad Tariq. New Delhi, 2014. Hard cover, pp 298, illustrated throughout. ISBN 10-9350980460



This book is stated to be the first in a series of illustrated guides that will eventually cover the coins of the Sultans and Moghul Emperors of India. This is a very ambitious project and the authors are to be congratulated for attempting such a venture. The volume under review starts with a forward by Barry Tabor, followed by an introduction to the series and then an introduction to the

present volume. There is then some superficial information about the Moghul Emperors and then some further information about the sons of Aurangzeb, who contested the throne after his death and with whose coins the present volume is concerned. There is then a short discussion of the reign of Shah Alam I and the dates of his reign. Following this is a series of discussions about the coins themselves, transliteration standards, how the obverse has been selected, dating standards, coin inscriptions and the couplets used on the coins by the different princes. A new catalogue number is described that could, apparently, be used to catalogue all Indian coins and there is a discussion about the use of X-ray fluorescence in elemental analysis of coins. Next comes a list of the silver mints of Shah Alam I as well as his mints for gold and copper, together with maps showing their geographical locations. It is to be regretted that this book does not include a catalogue of the gold and copper coins. Perhaps this will come in a future volume but having them all together would have made things easier for the user. The main body of the work is the listing by mint, type and date of all the silver coins issued by Shah Alam I. This part shows the Persian inscriptions in detail, using colour to highlight various words on the coin with the colours matching the transliteration shown under each coin. Following this is a discussion of the couplets used on the pre-accession coins and then catalogues of the coins of Azam Shah, Kam Bakhsh and Muazzam Shah. Finally there is a short bibliography and an index.

The book has two great strengths: the first, and most obvious, is the method of depicting the Persian legends. Anyone with a small knowledge of the nastaliq script used on the coins, will be able to read what is written on the photographs and with a little practice should be able to read the coins themselves. It would probably have been helpful to add a table of Persian letters. Perhaps this will be done in future volumes.

The second commendable aspect of the book is the effort the authors have made to ensure that the listings in the catalogue are based on definitely existing coins. There is a tendency to provide insufficient information about the source of proof in some cases. For instance p. 80 states 'Baldwins Auction' but does not state which auction or lot number. Also, a list of abbreviations would be helpful. Some of the references are to 'CNG' but nowhere is the meaning of this shown. Indeed CNG appears to refer to both Classical Numismatic Group, an American company and Classical Numismatic Gallery, a completely separate Indian company. But these are small criticisms and easily corrected in future volumes.

A more serious criticism is that the authors do not appear to have got a knowledgeable person to read through a draft of the work and help to correct some of the simple mistakes that inevitably creep into a work of this kind. Just to take a few examples: p. 82 Alamgirpur is not in Sindh; p. 113, the rupees of Chinapatan do not have the word 'sikka' on the obverse instead the word is 'sanah'; The mint of Fathebad Dharur seems to be missing (see Zeno); p. 146 there is a rupee of this type of the Khambayat mint with RY 1 known, but missing from this catalogue; p. 155, rupees of the Lucknow mint have the word 'mubarak' at the bottom of the obverse although it is not usually visible; p. 156, the mint epithet for Machhlipatan is 'bandar' as shown on p. 157; p. 165, the word 'mubarak' is written on the coin but missed in the transliteration underneath; p. 169, the word 'bahadur' is written in the transliteration but is not on the coin; p. 172, the current name of Nusratabad is Sagoor not Shahpur; p. 184, Shahabad Qanaaj is not current day Agra; and there are other mistakes of this kind.

In addition the authors often do not provide sufficient description of the differences between different obverse and reverse varieties. For instance, the difference between the coins of the Ahmadabad mint shown on pp. 231 and 233.

There could perhaps have been more discussion about the heavy-weight rupees. They are listed in the catalogue but the only mention in the text states that they are 25% overweight, which is incorrect since they weigh 12-12.1g and are therefore about 5-10% overweight. Information about the context of the issue of these coins (as discussed for instance by S.H. Hodivala) would have enhanced the work.

Hopefully, all of this type of problem will be better dealt with in the next volume.

However, there are more major problems with this book. The first is the use of the coding system as a catalogue number. No doubt this was very useful to the authors when they were compiling the data but it seems very complicated for the normal user of the book. An example of a catalogue number is given by the authors to explain how it works: NT 175.1160.1.a.a.100, which has all sorts of meaning such as type, obverse and reverse varieties, mint and denomination embedded within it. But how a user is expected to remember the code for the different denominations, once the work is extended across the sultans and other Moghuls, is a mystery, let alone all the codes for the mints. This is further exacerbated by the tendency of the authors to use the code as the title of the coin being described. Why not just say: Rupee or Half Rupee etc, which they sometimes do? Fortunately they were advised to add a much simpler coding system (M7.1, M7.2 etc) to be used in auction catalogues etc, so this is also added in brackets after the long code.

More interesting is the authors' decision to try to re-read, re-transliterate and re-translate the couplets found on the pre-accession coins. Quite why PRE-accession coins come at the end of the book rather than at the beginning is not clear. However, the reason for re-reading the couplets is explained and was apparently that *'the world has changed since the couplets were first translated. There is a better and broader understanding of religion and religious overtones in the modern world. Our new translations of the couplets present a modern view of what was written. They are presented without the heavy burden of religious intolerance or bias from a victor's point of view over a long established empire'* (p. 12). They go on in the same vein on page 213 where they state *'...Much of this work [concerning the couplets] appears to have been unsympathetic to the language itself which perhaps can be explained by a lack of knowledge and appreciation of Islam, the relative religious feelings of the various times and a general will to show the rulers as un-Christian dominators rather than to review the translations with a purposeful and open mind.'*

No evidence is cited to substantiate such statements, nor is there any argument made to support these views. They are merely stated as fact. Whether or not they might be true, the current reviewer has no idea since he has never had the honour of meeting such respected figures as C.J. Brown; S. Lane-Poole; C. J. Rogers; R.B. Whitehead; H Nelson-Wright or S.H. Hodivala to name but a few, nor have the religious and political views of these scholars been researched as far as this reviewer is aware. Unsupported statements of this kind tend to undermine the academic value of the book. As to the translations themselves, I leave it to others more competent to comment on their accuracy but most of the changes seem rather unnecessary and several obvious mistakes have been made. For instance the Persian inscription on p. 219 is written incorrectly, and the extra words found in couplet 3 (p. 222) are clearly not 'Ba Fazl' as can be seen in the authors' own depictions on page 289, where the coloured overwriting simply ignores the upstroke that is also obviously present on the coin thereby making it read something else. What this actually says is beyond the knowledge of this reviewer but perhaps scholars of the Persian language will be able to decipher the couplet more accurately.

It is unfortunate that the value of this book is undermined by some of these things. Nevertheless the colour depiction of the Persian legends and the confirmation of the dates and types remain valuable and the book is well produced. Whether or not the book is worth a hefty Rs3993 (about £40) for five or six years-worth of Moghul silver coins must be left to individuals to determine. I wish the authors every success with future volumes.

Paul Stevens

## Articles

### THE CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE AKSUMITE COINAGE IN ITS FIRST HUNDRED YEARS (AFTER 295 TO c. AD 400)

#### II) The metrological and typological evolution under King Aphilas<sup>3</sup>

By Wolfgang Hahn

##### *Preliminary remarks*

As a sequel to an article on the dating of the earliest Aksumite coinage, issued under king Endybis<sup>4</sup>, its further fate will be sketched in a series of contributions, surveying the current state of research and offering some unpretentious thoughts. Progressive recording of new material has led to several corrections of long-established hypotheses, as was already shown for the latest period of the Aksumite coinage<sup>5</sup>.

The first period in Akumite minting is defined by its pagan typology and ends with Ezanas' implementation of the Christian cult, the dating of which determines the duration of the pagan coinage period. There were four pagan kings, their names being known only from the coins: Endybis, Aphilas, Ousanas and Wzb (unvocalised), followed by Ezanas until his conversion. The exact date of this religious reorientation is not only of crucial importance for numismatics but is also discussed by many authors, being emotionally charged by the claim of the Ethiopian church to be the oldest officially established Christian church. It is, anyway, a question of a few decades. A late dating of Christianisation would allow more time for the 3! pagan reigns after Endybis, i. e. after c.310.

The traditional fixing is uncritical but still very popular, clinging to the years 330 or 333 EE (sometimes even mistaken as AD) and arguing from hagiographic sources which are, however, to be used with sceptical caution. If this date were correct there would be only 20 years for the reigns of Aphilas, Ousanas, Wzb and the pagan Ezanas, with plenty of coins to be placed during that period. It will be shown that we have five instead of two decades left because the official change of religion took place as late as 359/60. The apposition of the coin types between 310 and 360 and a rough estimate of their time of issue can be derived from the metrological and typological evolution, backed by statistical comparisons. As an auxiliary argument we might reckon on a continual influence from Roman weight and valuation ratios.

##### *Aphilas, the Innovator (c.310 to approximately 325)*

Undoubtedly Endybis (whose coinage has been our subject recently) was followed by Aphilas, called *bisi Dimele* by his clan name (nomen gentilicium). His coin production is the most sophisticated of all Aksumite kings as it aims at a system of multiple denominations, nine in number: it consisted of four values in gold, one in partially gilt silver, two in silver and two in copper. They are characterised by far-reaching metrological and typological developments. A changing availability of metals may have stimulated the demand.

The basis of our metrological reconstruction is the Graeco-Roman weight system as already proposed for the coins of

Endybis. The smallest weighable unit for the valuing of precious metal was still the chalkous (0.0567g as  $\frac{1}{60}$  drachm), 480 chalkoi making an ounce (27.22g =  $\frac{1}{12}$  pound). Possibly the weight tolerance in the gold standard was 1 chalkous. Within the silver coinage, hexadic fractions ( $\frac{1}{6}$ ,  $\frac{1}{12}$ ,  $\frac{1}{18}$  etc.) of the ounce seem to have been intended. 5 chalkoi made 2 habbas (of 0.14g) of the South-Arabian tradition = 3 grains of wheat<sup>6</sup>. If the weight tolerance in the silver standard was 1 habba, the adjustment of the gold coins was 2.5 times more accurate than that of the silvers.

The main gold unit - which we could simply call chrysos - kept the weight standard of 48 chalkoi =  $\frac{1}{10}$  ounce = 2.72g as under Endybis, but was supported by fractions of  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{8}$  the mintage of which was restricted to the reign of Aphilas - at least they do not occur with the names of other kings. Whereas the halves and quarters are only known from lone specimens, the lowest gold fraction, which had a weight of only 6 chalkoi (=  $\frac{1}{10}$  drachm =  $\frac{1}{80}$  ounce; 0.34g), was struck in relatively large quantities. Curiously enough, this weight corresponds to an old Indian unit, the manjadi (seed of *Adenanthera pavonina*)<sup>7</sup>.

In order to avoid an over-tiny size of the eighth chrysos a thinner flan was chosen and this was also transferred to the other gold coins; thus they got larger, but the height of the relief decreased, especially since the hammering of the flans did not allow a precasting of the relief to go on.

In such a situation, i.e. the introduction of a multiple system of denominations, these had to be differentiated not only by their size and weight, but also in their design and this led to typological innovations. Whereas the plain profile bust turned right, which Endybis had used, was now thought appropriate for the smaller coins the main unit of the chrysos (H.4) got a half-length image with distinctive regalia on both sides: on the obverse the king is holding a spear which required him to wear a tiara with spikes (a multilevel radiate crown with a solar connotation) over the head-cloth, whereas on the reverse a branch, presumably of olives<sup>8</sup> (perhaps serving as aspergillum), is combined with the plain head-cloth. Thus the king could have been depicted in his two functions, as warlord and peacekeeper (priest). The spear and the branch belong to the Roman inventory of types<sup>9</sup>. The ears of corn which encircle the king's image on both sides were continued from Endybis and may be taken as the symbol of the earth deity Meder (the Greek Demeter) joining the crescent of the moon and war god Mahrem (the Greek Ares), who was thought to be the spiritual father of the king. This new type of chrysoi remained in regular use under all the following rulers for the next 300 years. An ear of corn will also figure on the silver and copper coinage of Aphilas.

Half and quarter chrysoi are only known from single pairs of dies. The half chrysos (H.5) has a typological composition similar to the main unit, but without the ears and displaying a frontal image on the obverse. Such a frontal aspect - which we shall also find on Aphilas' coppers - demands skilled engravers, especially since the small coins have a flat relief; it is, therefore, only rarely met with even on obverses of Roman coins. There are, however, a few contemporary parallels, viz special representation pieces of the Licinii<sup>10</sup> reigning in the eastern half of the Empire (313-24); they

<sup>6</sup> This is the old Mesopotamian gin-tur, afterwards  $\frac{1}{120}$  of the shekel (tetradrachm) =  $\frac{1}{40}$  siglos; cf. W. Hahn, 'Überlegungen zum Gewichtssystem der aksumitischen Goldmünzen', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 25, 2002, 5-8.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Eran, 'Samen in der Metrologie', in: H. Witthöft (ed.), *Die historische Metrologie in den Wissenschaften*, St. Katharinen 1986, 248-61 (cf. p.258, no.18).

<sup>8</sup> The interpretation as olives is prompted by the pellets at the ends of the branch; it was already proposed by F.W. Prideaux, 'The coins of the Axumite Dynasty', *Num. Chron.* 1884, 204-19 (cf. p.208).

<sup>9</sup> In Roman numismatics the branch of olives is an attribute of the personified Pax, but it also occurs in the hand of the pacifying emperor (as *pacator triumphans*), e.g. on the reverse of aurei struck under Licinius I in 308/13 (RIC Siscia 195 and 218A). The transverse spear is common on Roman reverses, but it is also met in connection with a half-length bust on an obverse of Licinius II struck in 316 (RIC Aquileia 31 and 32).

<sup>10</sup> On gold coins of Licinius II struck in 321 (RIC Nicomedia 41 and 42; Antioch 31-3); frontal images of both Licinii figure on silver discs (cf. B. Overbeck, *Argentum Romanum*, München 1973). The assumption of

<sup>3</sup> Prepared with the kind assistance of Vincent West from an article originally published in German: 'Die ersten hundert Jahre aksumitischer Münzprägung: Chronologie, Metrologie und Typologie (2. Aphilas)', *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien* 47, 2013, 22-31.

<sup>4</sup> W. Hahn, 'Metrological aspects in reconsidering the date of the first Aksumite coins under king Endybis (as from c 295 AD)', *JONS* 218, Winter 2014, 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> W. Hahn, 'Sequence and chronology of the late Aksumite coin types reconsidered', *JONS* 205, Autumn 2010, 5-10.

could have reached Aksum as gifts brought by Roman envoys and may have inspired the designer of Aphilas' coins.

Because of the small space available for the legends, they had to be abbreviated on the fractional pieces: on the obverse of the half chrysos the euphonic ending of the name with S(igma) was dropped and the king's title shortened by a vertical stroke looking like an iota but representing an abbreviation mark (apostrophe)<sup>11</sup>; thus the letters of both halves are placed symmetrically. On the reverse, the geographical term (ethnicon) was shortened by a ligature of Omega and M with a horizontal apostrophe attached above (similarly on the unique small silver H.P7, but retrograde).

The quarter and eighth chrysoi were confined to the king's name and title: the obverse legend of the quarters (H.P5) is cut after the first letter of the title (Beta) and continued on the reverse with the second letter (Alpha). On the eighth chrysoi (H.6), the tiny diameter (7 mm) led to a distribution of the bust alone with the crescent beside on the obverse and the legend on the reverse where it was written in 4 symmetrical lines of 3/4/4/3 letters - hence the final letter S(igma) of the title had to be omitted.

The full chrysoi of Aphilas (H.4) are much rarer than those of his predecessor, but the fact that all 10 examples known come from different dies should make us cautious against inferring a small output. On the other hand, a lot of eighth chrysoi (H.6) have been recorded which perhaps originate from at least one dispersed hoard<sup>12</sup>. Their survival is comparable to the gold coins of Endybis. It seems as if Aphilas had one half of the available metal coined into these tiny pieces<sup>13</sup>; perhaps there were plenty of Endybis coins in his treasury. Some specimens of barbarized style might have been struck even posthumously<sup>14</sup>.

Keeping in mind that the Romans did not strike coins of such a small size we have to look at the Hellenistic tradition as under the Ptolemies and Sabaeans. The functions of these coins could have been manifold: they were certainly convenient as equalisers when weighing a larger sum of chrysoi, or for scattering as distribution money on festive occasions, or even as an equivalent in bartering with salt bars (amole); but a main purpose as a substitute for a shortage of silver coins is also conceivable.

The origin of the Aksumite silver is something of a mystery. Besides what could be regained from the refining of the native gold (alluvial and mined)<sup>15</sup> small deposits might have been exploited in present-day Eritrea. But it remains doubtful whether these sources were ever sufficient. Aphilas continued the striking of argyroi on the standard of Endybis (at  $\frac{1}{12}$  ounce = 2.27g; valued 18 to a chrysos) and with a similar type. Their scarcity matches those of the chrysoi. Likewise, it seems as if only one half of the available

metal would have been coined into these argyroi of the old style whilst the other half was apparently used for a newly introduced denomination.

This coin (H.8) came as the most spectacular novelty of Aphilas. It is, so to say, bimetallic, carrying a small amount of gold in the form of a partial gilding on the underlying silver flan. The size of this silver flan is 11-12 mm whilst the golden inlay has the same size of 7 mm as the eighth chrysoi and repeats their obverse with the royal bust as an imago clipeata (i. e. the round shield portrait of ancient depictions), but transfers the king's name and title to the circumscription. Written in a continuous circle, the first letter (beta) had to be separated from the last letter (sigma) by a stroke which, in this case, serves as a separator (like the *näqet* of the Ethiopian Fidal script)<sup>16</sup>. Curiously the other side retained the traditional bust with the king's name and title, in the old manner, with the two legend halves separated by the bottom of the bust and terminated by the abbreviation mark. Strictly speaking this is a combination of the two sides of the eighth chrysos (taken together) with the obverse of a small argyros (H.P7).

Turning from the typological to the technical and metrological aspects of the new coins, the fire gilding<sup>17</sup> was a laborious procedure and occurs nowhere else in ancient numismatics. Besides the effect of the bicoloured appearance (which in later periods became its main purpose by utilising the symbolism of gold as a celestial colour), at its early usage it was certainly intended as a practice to increase the value of the coins. Thus, they needed less silver than the argyroi of the old style and are manifested as a further fraction completing the gold series.

In order to determine the value of the new coin we should be able to calculate the amount of gold used for the gilding and add it to the silver weight of the flan. We expect a fraction of either  $\frac{1}{3}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the eighth chrysos (weighing 6 chalkoi), i.e. a value in gold of either 3 chalkoi (composed of 2 chalkoi gold inlay + 1 chalkous worth in silver<sup>18</sup>) or 2 chalkoi (in a ratio 1:1). In theory a decision could be derived from the thickness of the inlay: given its diameter of 7 mm, a thickness of 0.15 mm was necessary to achieve the weight of 2 chalkoi gold (0.11g), or 0.075 mm for 1 chalkous (0.0567g)<sup>19</sup>. The latter is, of course more realistic<sup>20</sup>. So the intended standard of the "chrysgyros" should have been 0.0567g gold plus 15 chalkoi silver (0.85g =  $\frac{1}{32}$  ounce), altogether 0.9g<sup>21</sup>. Another silver coin of the same size has no gilding (H.P7) and must therefore represent the half value of the chrysgyros and thus the equivalent of 1 chalkous gold (=  $\frac{1}{48}$  chrysos). It is so far only known from a unique specimen, probably no more than an experimental issue, comparable to the half and the quarter chrysoi pieces. Of course, it has a reverse type of its own: the large ear of corn as we shall find once more on the lepta in copper (H.9).

Whereas the small change of Endybis had been cast in an indefinite alloy (which looks like billon or potin) Aphilas seems to have had copper coins produced, at first still cast with high relief and even in two denominations: lepta (H.10) and dilepta (H.11) which are rather rare. Both have an obverse showing a frontal bust, but are typologically distinguished on the reverse where the double

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earlier gold coins struck by Maxentius and Constantine I as models is less acceptable because of their geographical remoteness.

<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, the reader could also understand the legend as written in the dative case (cf. W. Hahn, 'Déclination et orthographe des légends grecques sur les monnaies d'Axoum', *Bull. Soc. Franc. de Numismatique* 49, 1994, 944-48) for which there are contemporary Roman precedents (RIC VI, p.39, VII, p.30, n.3). A. Anzani, 'Numismatica Aksumita', *Rivista Ital. di Numismatica* 1941, pp.121f connected the Iota with the king's name for the fanciful reading Iaphilas whom he took for a coregent of Aphilas.

<sup>12</sup> It is possible that the "Endybis-hoard" which surfaced in the early 1960s in Aksum contained also such pieces; of this hoard 33 gold coins of Endybis were published by P. Bourlier, *Numismatique axoumite, Catalogue d'exposition Collectionneurs et collections numismatiques*, Paris 1968, 67-70 and in the sale catalogue Poindessault (Hotel Drouot) 18 June 1980, 232-41. An increasing occurrence of the little Aphilas gold in the international coin trade in recent years might be traced back to a suspected hoard from Mai Adrasa near Shire, nearly 50 km west of Aksum.

<sup>13</sup> At present there are 95 specimens of H.6 on record against 10 of H.4.

<sup>14</sup> They must be distinguished from modern forgeries like AC (S.C. Munro-Hay & B. Juel-Jensen, *Aksumite Coinage*, London 1995) nos.18, 19

<sup>15</sup> On the extraction of gold in Tigray cf. recently W. Smidt, 'Stammte das Gold der Aksumiten doch aus Tigray - Lokale Traditionen widersprechen antiken Quellen', *Money Trend* 45, 2013, Nr.9, 186-191. Contrary to what has been asserted by J.-N. Barrandon et al., 'Le monnayage d'or axoumite: une alteration particulière', *Rev. Numismatique* 1990, 186-211 (cf. pp.187f) it was possible to regain the silver after the separation, cf. A. Ramage & P. Craddock, *King Croesus' Gold - Excavations at Sardis and the History of Gold Refining*, London 2000 (cf. pp.166f, 173 and 208f, with archaeological evidence p.145).

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<sup>16</sup> This was proposed by S.C. Munro-Hay in M. Heldman, *African Zion, The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, New Haven /London 1993, p.105; indeed a vertical stroke was used as a word-separator on the older monumental inscriptions of Aksum.

<sup>17</sup> This method of application using amalgam was relatively new at that time, cf. P.A. Lins & W.A. Oddy, 'The origin of Fire Gilding', *Journal of Archaeological Science* 2, 1975, 365-73.

<sup>18</sup> Provided the gold/silver ratio remained 1 : 15 as under Endybis; looking at its development in the Roman empire a rise in the official price of silver by 1/5 (resulting in a ratio 1 : 12) is conjectured there only later (324).

<sup>19</sup> Given the specific gravity of gold (19.3g per cm<sup>3</sup>) the cubic volume of 2 chalkoi (0.11g) is 5.7 mm<sup>3</sup> which is to be divided by the surface area of the inlay 38.49mm<sup>2</sup> (half diameter<sup>2</sup> x  $\pi$ ).

<sup>20</sup> It is, however, difficult to check this assumption in reality. F. & G. Russo 'Sugli intarsi in oro nella monetazione Aksumita' *Boll.di Numismatica* 13, 1989, 144-60 reckon with a thickness of only a few thousand mm, but they do not refer to a specific coin type and they speculate with what was technically practicable -neither was it the intention to save gold when Aphilas introduced this denomination.

<sup>21</sup> Many of the specimens at hand have broken edges so that not too many of the indicated weights are significant (0.98-0.71g).

value shows the round shield bust. Regarding their weight standard, which is difficult to reconstruct from the few, mostly worn pieces, we might imagine that it was aligned to that of the argyros of the old type to which the lepton might have been a smooth fraction ( $1/100$  if we apply the rule of the thumb for the silver/copper ratio). The double piece was soon abandoned and the lepton struck on a thinner, hammered flan with a new type (H.9) matching that of the small argyros (H.P7).

**Conclusion**

Aphilas' elaborate coinage system consisted of the following nine denominations

	Weight in chalkoi	grams
1 chrysos	AV 48	2.72
= 2 half chrysoi	24	1.36
= 4 quarter chrysoi	12	0.68
= 8 eighth chrysoi	6	0.34
= 24 chrysargyroi	AV 1 + AR 15	0.91
= 48 small argyroi	AR 15	0.85
= 18 old chrysoi	40	2.27
= 900? dilepta	80?	4.54?
= 1800? lepta	40?	2.27?

**APHILAS**



**A DANGEROUS FORGERY OF THE QUMM DINAR OF AH 308.**

By Roland Dauwe

During our research on the Islamic coinage of Qumm (Iran), we came across modern forgeries of the dinar of AH 308, struck in the name of the Abbasid caliph, al-Muqtadir. The first two pieces were offered to me by a Canadian dealer in March and April 2006. A third specimen was sold on eBay by a British dealer in October 2012. However, we are convinced that both dealers were not aware of the fact that they were selling forgeries. The first two pieces were made of gilt silver, the gilding being better on one piece than on the other, but on both with pale debased gold. The third one was not gilt at all and was sold as a dirham.

All three pieces are identical, crimped in exactly the same way and showing the same wear, scratches and dents. The diameter varies between 22.5 and 23 mm, while the die axis is 4h. There is no doubt that they were copied from an existing dinar, but it is not quite clear how these forgeries were made. The characters are rather sharp and no filings can be seen on the edges, which seems to indicate that they are not cast forgeries, but that they were struck from specially-made dies.

When offered separately these forgeries can easily been taken for genuine coins, the wavy flan and dents taking away any doubts. This is reason enough to publish this forgery which, in the opinion of Steve Album, was probably made circa 2005. For that reason it is very possible that the original dinar was part of one of the two large hoards of Abbasid dinars discovered early this century near Hamadan. Both hoards contained several Qumm dinars struck during the first quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AH, including pieces dated 308.



Fig. 1: gold plated silver, 3.50 g.



Fig. 2: weakly gold-plated silver, 2.20 g.



Fig. 3: silver, 2.00 g.

## THE MINT OF FUMAN (IRAN): NEW DATA

by Roland Dauwe

Fuman, a town located in Gilan province, not far from Rasht, is known as a minting place for a very limited period of time. Apart from one known dinar dated 484, struck in the name of the Seljuq ruler, Malikshah I (AH 465-485)\*, all the other recorded coins were struck by the Qara Qoyunlu, the Aq Qoyunlu or the early Safavid rulers, covering a short lapse of time of about 150 years.

Diler mentioned only two Qara Qoyunlu pieces, one in the name of Iskandar (AH 823-841), the second one in the name of Jahanshah (AH 841-872). Recently we had the chance to find an undated tanka struck in the name of Jahanshah, and, considering its great rarity, we decided to publish it here (fig. 1 – 5.07 g, 15.5 mm).



Fig. 1: The tanka of Jahanshah. The mintname can be seen in the cartouche in the lower half of the obverse.

Most of the Aq Qoyunlu pieces are tankas in the name of Hasan (AH 857-882), who obviously continued Jahanshah's coinage. Tankas were also issued by Ya'qub (AH 883-896), as well as light tankas by Baysunghur (AH 896-897), and a ! tanka is known for Alvand (AH 903-910), but all these later issues are more difficult to find.

The Safavid rulers continued minting there, but no coins in the name of Isma'il I (AH 907-930) have yet been recorded and it seems that the mint was re-opened during the reign of Tahmasp I (AH 930-984). Only a few rare shahi are recorded for that ruler, belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> western standards, used in 937-946 and in 954-959 respectively.



Fig. 2: Shahi of Tahmasp I, dated 938 (6.22g), with the mint name at the bottom of the obverse

Strangely enough, the most common Safavid coins for Fuman are the 2 shahis in the name of Isma'il II (AH 984-985). Minting continued under Muhammad Khudabandah (AH 985-995), Stephen Album's type A, used in 885-886, being by far more common than type B. It is very strange that all the 2 shahis of type A are mules with, on one side, an obverse of Muhammad Khudabandah, with the mint name Rasht, and, on the other side, an obverse of Isma'il II with the name of Fuman. A possible explanation was given by Steve Album, who suggested that, in the summer, the mint of Rasht moved to Fuman, where it was a lot cooler that time of the year. The question remains, however, where these pieces were actually struck, at Fuman or at Rasht? The most acceptable scenario is that they were indeed minted at Fuman, but that the officials found nobody there to make new dies and decided to use the obverse dies of Rasht. The old dies of Isma'il II were obviously still there, but they preferred to use, as the reverse, his obverse dies, as the reverse of that issue has no kalima. Muhammad

Khudabandah seems to be the last ruler in whose name coins were struck at Fuman.



Fig. 3: Two shahi with the obverse of Isma'il II with mint name Fuman (at the bottom) and with the obverse of Muhammad Khudabandah on the other side with mint name Rasht (partly visible, bottom left). 4.8 g, no date visible.



Fig. 4: Two shahi of Muhammad Khudabandah (4.4 g, no date visible). The mint name is in the circular cartouche in the left-hand image.

Thorburn mentioned a silver and a gold coin that could have been struck there in the name of the Qajar ruler, Fath 'Ali Shah, but none of these have yet been recorded by later authors. Civic coppers, issued by the local authorities, are recorded too (A-3229), but are of a great rarity.

In 2012 we had the chance to purchase another Fuman piece of an even greater importance. It is a 2 dirham coin, dated 744 (fig. 5 – 1.43 g, 15 mm), and struck in the name of the Ilkhan, Sulayman (AH 739-746). This piece not only extends the minting activities at Fuman by more than a century, but also adds a new mint for that ruler and the Ilkhans in general.



Fig. 5: Two dirham coin of the Ilkhanid ruler, Sulayman. The mint name is in the margin at the top of the left-hand image.

(\*) 25 km southwest of Fuman, Rudkhan Castle was built by the Seljuqs. This military complex covers 2.6 hectares and is well preserved, with its 42 towers still intact. Maybe the Seljuqs used Fuman briefly as a mint place during its construction.

# THE COINAGE OF THE SAFFARIDS OF SIJISTAN AND RELATED DYNASTIES, 247h-332h

## PART 2

By Stephen Lloyd

Technical problems meant that the Arabic script in *Journal* 219 was not printed properly. This was quickly corrected by the Editor and printers, and a revised version of the *Journal* has now been printed and distributed.

Following publication of the first part of this Catalogue several people have kindly contacted me with information, comments and suggestions. This has already yielded five or six new catalogue entries, as well as providing many additional or improved images. Particular thanks here are due to Muhammad Limbada, who generously made his excellent collection of Saffarid coins available to be studied and photographed, but I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of two other collectors, one of whom has preferred to remain anonymous. I must also express my continued gratitude to Lutz Ilisch who has kindly supplied images and checked references to which I do not have easy access. Without his assistance the shortcomings of this catalogue would be even more apparent.

The following references and abbreviations should be added to those given in the introduction to Part 1:

<b>Jafar</b>	Collection of Yahya D. Jafar, Dubai
<b>Morton &amp; Eden</b>	Morton & Eden Ltd, London, auction catalogues
<b>Ösarve</b>	Ösarve Hoard, CNS 1.2
<b>SNAT</b>	<i>Sylogie Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen</i> , volumes: XIVc Hurasan III XIVd Hurasan IV
<b>Stora Velinge</b>	Stora Velinge Hoard. CNS 1.2
<b>Zeno</b>	www.zeno.ru: Oriental coins database

Finally for readers who are less familiar with the history of the Saffarids during this period, a fairly short and useful overview can be found online at: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/saffarids>.

## AL-AHWAZ

The Zanj first captured the city in 256h, but appear not to have held it for any length of time since they attacked it again in 259h before entering and sacking it once more in 261h. It first came under Saffarid control in 262h when Ya'qub recaptured it from the Zanj, but the two different Abbasid issues of 263h show that this lasted no more than a matter of months. Later that year Ya'qub reoccupied al-Ahwaz again and this time seems to have held it until his death in 265h, after which Abbasid coins of 266h and 267h show that the city came back under caliphal control. Thereafter, the only Saffarid coins known from al-Ahwaz are a few dirhams of 'Amr b. al-Layth struck in 268h.



**GAh262A al-Ahwaz 262h (dinar, Abbasid)**  
Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Morton & Eden auction 69, 10 April 2014, lot 37 (3.93g)  
Emirates auction I, lot 214 (4.03g) = Bernardi 177Nd



**Ah262A al-Ahwaz 262h (Abbasid)**  
Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (2.90g)



**Ah263A.1 al-Ahwaz 263h (Abbasid)**  
Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | جعفر  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Najaf Coins and Collectables, in trade (weight not given)  
NS 83-88 (none illustrated); Elsen auction 116, 16 March 2013, lot 1905 (part, not illustrated, described as 'citing Ja'far')



**GAh263A al-Ahwaz 263h (dinar, Abbasid)**  
Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Morton & Eden auction 63, lot 43 (4.21g)  
Bernardi 177Nd



**Ah263A.2 al-Ahwaz 263h (Abbasid)**  
Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*NS 89-91 (3.62, 2.74, 2.92g, coin 89 illustrated)



**Gh263 al-Ahwaz 263h (dinar)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Jafar (4.26g)



**Ah263 al-Ahwaz 263h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Peus auction 384, 2 September 2005, lot 1115 (2.16g)  
Vasmer 8 (3 examples cited); NS 92-95 (2.39, 3.93, 3.12, 3.82g);  
SCC 1323 (3.34g)

**Gh264 al-Ahwaz 264h (dinar)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

Bernardi 197Nd, citing *Checklist*. An example is also reported in a private collection, unfortunately not available to me.



**Ah264.1 al-Ahwaz 264h (donative type)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*ICA 17, 26 October 2010, lot 518 (3.01g)



**Ah264.2 al-Ahwaz 264h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Peus auction 341, lot 1666 (2.85g)  
Private Collection, Cambridge (3.86g)  
Vasmer 9-10 (1 example cited); BMC (uncatalogued) = Walker p.6; Qatar III, 3604 (4.05g); NS 96-127; Limbada (2.93g)



**Ah265.1 al-Ahwaz 265h (donative type)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Tübingen Collection LI, 2.74g



**Ah265.2 al-Ahwaz 265h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الامير يعقوب  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Private Collection, North America (2.81g)  
Private Collection, Cambridge (2.88g); Gorny & Mosch auction 153, lot 5429 (3.28g); NS 130-182, all with مح below reverse field (not visible on the illustrated specimen); Tübingen EA2E4 (mounted, 2.96g)



**Ah265A al-Ahwaz 265h (Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Tübingen AIID6 (h2.61g), with *al-Muwaffaq billah* recut over *Ya'qub b. al-Layth*; NS 192-210

**Ah266A al-Ahwaz 266h (Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله  
Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | مح

ANS 58183.b; Album FPL 196, 114 ('with *al-Muwaffaq*', not fully described, weight not given). The coin of this mint and date described by Tornberg as citing Ja'far (Tornberg 452 = Diler 1150-

63) is almost certainly a misreading; the latest issues of al-Ahwaz to bear Ja'far's name were struck in 263h (see Ah263A.1 above).

**GAh266A al-Ahwaz 266h (dinar, Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

Diler 293, citing Album FPL 7 (not described but presumably of this type). The date is not listed by Bernardi.



**Ah267A al-Ahwaz 267h (Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | مح

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (3.67g)



**GAh267A al-Ahwaz 267h (dinar, Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*ICA 24, 9 May 2013, lot 4331 (4.06g); ex Sotheby's auction, March 1988, lot 257; Bernardi 177Nd



**Ah268 al-Ahwaz 268h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | عمرو بن الليث

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (3.33g); Limbada (2.90g)

**GAh268A al-Ahwaz 268h (dinar, Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

Bernardi 177Nd (in a private collection, not fully described)



**GAh269A.1 al-Ahwaz 269h (dinar, Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله | س

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | ذو الوزارتين

\*Baldwin's Auction 71, 29 September 2011, lot 1674 (3.92g)



**GAh269A.2 al-Ahwaz 269h (dinar, Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | ذو الوزارتين | ر

\*Morton & Eden auction 59, 13 November 2012, lot 280



**Ah269A al-Ahwaz 269h (Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | ذو الوزارتين | رم

\*ICA 18, 26 July 2011, lot 397 (3.38g); SICA IV, 107 (3.00g)

**ANDARABA**

Except for two poorly-preserved specimens which may date from the 270s, all Saffarid coins from Andaraba were struck during the middle years of the 280s. The final Saffarid issues of Andaraba were probably struck in 287h, which is also the year that the first Samanid dirhams were issued there.

For many dates in the 280s, two or three different authorities seem to have struck coins at Andaraba in the same year. Banijurid and Abbasid issues are known from almost all the years for which Saffarid coins are attested, and the local governors *Asad* and *Hamdan* are also cited. It seems unlikely that this actually reflects a single location changing hands every few months, and the name 'Andaraba' may cover several mints attached to different silver mines in this area.

The coinage of Andaraba from this period is of particular interest, and it is unfortunate that the coins themselves are often difficult to read. They were often poorly struck, while the small flans left the engraver with very little space, meaning in particular that dates are sometimes partial or abbreviated, and frequently difficult to read. Some coins have the appearance of being contemporary imitations or perhaps semi-official issues, apparently made in good silver but from coarsely-engraved and blundered

dies. Others appear to be official striking but were made using obsolete dies, while still others were struck from dies with the ruler's name recut. A die-study might well clarify matters and indicate the extent to which dies were shared between the various types, although this lies well beyond the scope of the current article.

Two Saffarid dirhams, tentatively assigned to dates in the 270s, are described below. To place these in context, the types of dirham struck at Andaraba during this decade can be summarised thus:

**Banijurid**, with *Muhammad* below obverse field (known for 270h)

**Banijurid**, with *Sa'id b. Shu'ayb* below obverse field (known for 270h, 271h 272h, 273h and 274h)

**Banijurid**, with *Muhammad ibn Ahmad* below obverse field (known for 275h, 276h, 277h, 278h and 279h)

**An27x Andaraba, date unclear (possibly 27x)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: *name of caliph unclear* | الله | محمد | رسول | الله

Stora Vellinge 2403 (3.02g)

Unfortunately neither the year nor the name of the caliph is clear on the photograph, but the decade does appear to be *saba'in* indicating a date in the 270s.



**An277 Andaraba, date unclear (possibly [27]7h)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | اسد

\*Album auction 17, 19 September 2013, lot 468 (3.53g)

The cataloguer read the date tentatively as 287h, but the caliph is clearly al-Mu'tamid rather than al-Mu'tadid. The unit of the date is not clear in the photograph. I have been unable to find any other dirhams of Andaraba which cite Asad, whose name appears in the reverse field.



**An280A.1 Andaraba 280h (Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*ICA 24, 9 May 2003, lot 4481 (4.23g)

SNAT XIVc 49 (2.18g)



**An280A.2 Andaraba 280h (Abbasid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله | ه

\*SNAT XIVc 50 (3.80g)



**An280B Andaraba 280h (Banijurid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | محمد بن احمد

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله

\*SNAT XIVc 51 (2.77g)



**An282B Andaraba 282h (Banijurid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | ابو داود

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله | محمد بن احمد

SNAT XIVc 52



**An283B**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | محمد بن احمد

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله

\*Zeno #65393 (weight not given); Zeno 13983 (3.99g)



**An283 Andaraba 283h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله

\*SNAT XIVc 53 (3.00g), noting that the name of 'Amr is possibly recut over that of the Banijurid governor, Muhammad b. Ahmad



**An284 Andaraba 284h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله

\*SNAT XIVc 54 (3.91g)



**An284B Andaraba 284h (Banijurid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | محمد بن احمد | ornament

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: unread letter | الله | المعتضد بالله | محمد | رسول | الله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (2.88g)

**An285**

Mentioned by Diler, citing Lebedev, V.P., 'Numismatic Studies by the Saratov Region Student and Numismatist Y.E. Pyrsov,' *Drevnosti Povolzh'ya I drugikh regionov*, issue III, Numismatic Edition, vol. II, Nizhny Novgorod, 2000. This work is a study of coins of the Jujids, not the Saffarids, and Diler's reference to it is evidently a mistake.



**An286 Andaraba 286h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | حمدان

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله | عمرو بن الليث

SNAT XIVc 58, 59, \*60 (3.00, 3.26, 3.54g)

Spink Zurich auction 27, lot 465 (4.00g); Ösarve 21 (catalogued as 'Jannaba 28(3)h')



**An286B Andaraba 286h (Banijurid)**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | محمد بن احمد | ornament

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (3.38g)



**An287.1 Andaraba (?) 287h**

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (2.82g). The date is clear, but the mint-name not certain although it appears to start with a definite article *bi-An...* and end with a *ta marbuta*.



**An287.2 Andaraba 287h (?)**

Obv. margin: mint and date

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله | عمرو بن الليث

\*Limbada (3.16g)

Only the first part of the mint-name is visible, apparently beginning *bi-An...* The unit of the date actually looks like a repetition of *sanat*, but if indeed a number is more likely to be '7' than '6'.



**An287B Andaraba 287h (Banijurid)**

Obv. margin: mint and date

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | احمد بن محمد

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله | اسمعيل

\*Stephen Album, in trade, coin 54316 (4.34g)



#### Andaraba, date unclear

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | اسمعيل (?)

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول الله | المعتضد بالله | عمرو بن الليث

\*SNAT XIVc 55 (2.70g)

#### Andaraba 287h-289h

Samanid dirhams of these dates are known, citing Isma'il b. Ahmad (named as Abu Ibrahim) and in conjunction with a local Banijurid governor (SNAT XIVc, 62-69).

### MADINAT BUST

The single example described below appears to be the only dirham known to have been struck here during the Saffarid period:



#### Bu298

#### Madinat Bust 298h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده | لا شريك له | الليث بن علي

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول الله | المقنن بالله

\*Vasmer 93 = BMC II, 250 = Walker 3 (2.60g)

### AL-BASRA

A coin purporting to be a Saffarid dirham of al-Basra was offered in a London auction. Its authenticity has been questioned on several grounds:

- the century of the date is clearly '300' rather than '200' and to judge from the very clear enlarged scan the decade looks like '20' rather than '60';
- the calligraphy is abnormal for a Basra dirham of the early 260s, but features such as the thick *lam-alifs* in the obverse field with 'tails' at the top are characteristic of coins struck under al-Radi in the 320s;
- the coin presents a number of historical problems, given that there is no record of Ya'qub ever controlling Basra;
- exceptionally, no caliph is cited - the name of Ya'qub b. al-Layth, rather crudely executed, appears in its place. I know of no other dirham of Ya'qub which omits the caliph's name in this way.

In my opinion this piece is a concoction: an authentic Abbasid dirham of the caliph al-Radi (322-329h) which has been doctored in modern times so that the caliph's name has been altered and replaced with that of Ya'qub b. al-Layth. This complex-sounding

procedure is now relatively straightforward for a competent silversmith, and a few hours' work can transform a worn and almost worthless Abbasid dirham into an unpublished and potentially valuable Saffarid coin.

Because the coin would, if authentic, be of considerable historical interest and importance, it seems best to illustrate and describe it fully here.

I would like to thank Tim Wilkes for his advice and expert opinion on this piece, and particularly for drawing my attention to its 'impossible' date.



#### 'Bs263'

#### 'al-Basra 263h'

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده | لا شريك له

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول الله | يعقوب بن الليث

\*ICA 25, 10 December 2013, lot 668 (3.00g)

### BALKH

There is only one date recorded for Saffarid coins from Balkh, namely 287h. All examples known to me are struck at double weight, a feature shared with similar issues of Naysabur dated 284h and 286h.

Banijurid issues are known from the 280s, with the latest reported date being 284h (Baldwin's Auction 19, 4 May 1999, lot 1420). From 290h onwards the Samanids began to strike dirhams at Balkh, and examples are known for most dates thereafter until the 360s. Banijurid coins are also known for a few dates in the 290s.

Diler lists a dirham of Balkh 263h citing 'Muhammad' which he classifies as Saffarid. Unless 'Muhammad' is an error for 'Ya'qub' this would seem to be a Banijurid issue incorrectly described



#### B1287

#### Balkh 287h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده | لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول الله | المعتضد بالله

\*Peus auction 341, lot 1669 (6.04g, note double weight)

Limbada (5.95g); Spink Zurich 27, lot 464 (6.04g)

## (AL)-BANJHIR

Saffarid dirhams were struck in Banjhir between 259-261h and are among the dynasty's very first silver coins. Before this, Abbasid dirhams are known for just three dates: 246h, 256h and 258h.

As at Andaraba, these Saffarid issues are interspersed with coins citing the Banijurid Muhammad b. Ahmad, as well as standard Abbasid types naming only the caliph.



### Bn259.1 Banjhir 259h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | المطيع يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (2.91g)

Vasmer 1 = Tornberg 1, 2; Tübingen 98-4-2 (GET INFO);



### Bn259.2 al-Banjhir 259h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Peus auction 386, lot 1090 (2.98g)

Vasmer 2 (1 example cited)



### Bn260.1 Banjhir 260h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | المطيع يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Tübingen 98-4-2

Stora Vellinge 2381 (3.63g)



### Bn260.2 al-Banjhir 260h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (5.38g, note double weight and extra border in margin on each side)

Vasmer 3 (over 10 examples cited); BMC II, 244 = Walker p.6; Album FPL 218, 48656 (weight not given); Peus auction 363, lot 6099 (2.74g); Qatar III, 3605 (2.70g); ANS 68.67.2 (broader flan); Limbada (2.97g); Private Collection, North America (2.98g)

### Bn260.3 al-Banjhir 260h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | ب

Vasmer 4 = Tornberg 3



### Bn260A al-Banjhir 260h (Abbasid)

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*SNAT XIVd 48 (2.60g)



### Bn261 al-Banjhir 261h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | يعقوب

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge 721068 (3.79g)

Vasmer 5 (5 examples cited); Album FPL 217, 39686 (2.98g);

ANS 1927.179.8 (2.57g)

### Bn261B al-Banjhir 261h

Banijurid dirhams of this date are also known, citing Muhammad b. Ahmad (Tornberg p.147, 5; SNAT XIVd, 55-56)



### Bn262A al-Banjhir 262h (Abbasid)

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله

\*Qatar I, 2041 (2.90g)

SICA IV, 229 (h3.58g); Album FPL 177, 136

### Bn262B al-Banjhir 262h

Miles tentatively identified a coin in the Susa Hoard as a Banijurid issue of this year (NS 248).

## JANNABA

The Saffarid and Abbasid issues published here have the distinction of being the first known coins with this mint-name. Minting of Abbasid silver resumed there in 299h and examples are known for most years of al-Muqtadir's reign.

Diler lists three additional dates for Abbasid dirhams struck during this period, but checking Diler's own references (Zambaur for 277h and 278h, Album FPL 167, coin 198 for 282h) shows that all three are in fact Saffarid issues.

### Jn275A

### Jannaba 275h

An Abbasid dirham of this type is known (Tübingen AI2 F1)



### GJn275

### Jannaba 275h (dinar)

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field:

لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الناصر لدين الله | الموفق بالله | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | احمد بن الموفق بالله

BMC IX, 245m= Bernardi 199NI (4.21g)



### Jn275

### Jannaba 275h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field:

لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الناصر لدين الله | الموفق بالله | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | احمد بن الموفق بالله

\*Source of illustration uncertain

ICA12, lot 3327 (3.04g)

### Jn277

### Jannaba 277h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | الموفق بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | عمرو بن الليث

Vasmer 40 = Tornberg 150 (date incorrectly read as 279h, corrected by Vasmer.)



### Jn278

### Jannaba 278h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | المعتمد بالله | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | المفوض الى الله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (3.78)

Vasmer 42 (1 example cited, 3.45g); Tübingen EA3 C4 (3.25g)



### Jn279.1

### Jannaba 279h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | المعتمد بالله

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد الى الله | عمرو بن الليث

\*ICA10, lot 257 (3.14g)

Tübingen 2000-81-12 (3.82g)



### Jn279.2

### Jannaba 279h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله | أمير المؤمنين

\*Tübingen 2000-11-82 (3.13g)



### Jn282

### Jannaba 282h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله

\*ICA10, lot 258 (2.87g)

Tübingen EA3 C5 (3.64g); Album FPL 202, 288 (2.34g);

Album FPL 167, 198 (weight not given)



### Jn283

### Jannaba 283h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)

Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث

Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33

Rev. field: لله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتمد بالله

\*Private Collection, Cambridge (3.08g)  
 Vasmer 52 (3 examples cited); ICA10, lot 259 (2.95g); Limbada (3.35g); Tübingen 97-6-14 (3.10g)

### Jannaba 283h

For another coin published as being of this mint and date but with 'Amr's name on the reverse, see Ösarve 21 (published here as An286).



### Jn284

### Jannaba 284h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
 Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث  
 Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
 Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله

\*Tübingen 97-11-66 (3.83g)



### Jn286

### Jannaba 286h

Obv. margin: Qur'an xxx, 4-5 (outer); mint and date (inner)  
 Obv. field: لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له | عمرو بن الليث  
 Rev. margin: Qur'an ix, 33  
 Rev. field: الله | محمد | رسول | الله | المعتضد بالله

\*Limbada (3.19g)

Vasmer 59 (1 example cited); Tübingen 2000-11-26 (2.44g)

## TWO RUSTAMID FULUS STRUCK IN TĪHARAT AND TILIMSĪN

By Ludovic Liétard

This article is devoted to two particular medieval Islamic copper coins struck in Tīharat and Tilimsīn (Tiaret and Tlemcen in Algeria). They were assigned to the 'Abbasids by Eustache [8, 9] but I think this attribution is debatable. This article proposes an attribution to the Rustamid dynasty and to the ruler 'Abd al-Wahhāb (AH 168 – 208 / AD 784 – 824).

Section 1 introduces these two fulus<sup>22</sup>. Their attribution to the 'Abbasids is challenged in section 2. An attribution to the Rustamid ruler 'Abd al-Wahhāb is proposed in section 3.

### 1. The coins under consideration

The two coins under consideration are described hereafter.

#### 1.1 A fals struck by 'Abd al-Wahhāb in Tīharat

<sup>22</sup> Fulus is the plural of fals, a fals being a copper or bronze coin in the early centuries of the Islamic era.

The existence of this coin is only cited by Eustache in [8, 9] and he provides no pictures or drawings. The obverse bears the name of 'Abd al-Wahhāb. It can be translated by "Ordered by 'Abd al-Wahhāb":

مما امر  
 به عبد  
 الوهاب

The reverse bears the mint name and can be translated by "This fals was struck in Tīharat":

ضرب  
 هذا الفل  
 بتيهرت

The legends on this fals can be illustrated by the following drawing:

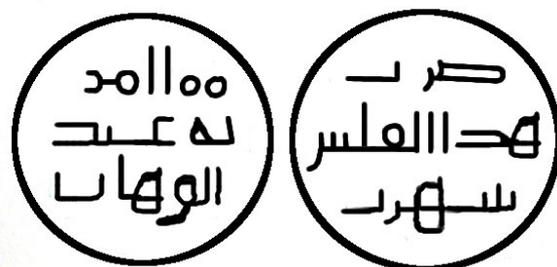


Fig. 1: A fals struck by 'Abd al-Wahhāb in Tīharat

Three examples (A, B and C) of this coin are introduced in this article. Coin A (2.09 g and 16 mm) is shown hereafter (Fig. 2), coins B and C are shown at the end of this article (Figs. 7 and 8).



Fig. 2: Obverse of coin A      Reverse of coin A

#### 1.2 A fals struck by 'Abd al-Wahhāb in Tilimsīn

This coin was presented by Eustache in [9] and three examples can be found in the literature:

- in the article [9] by Eustache (plate I),
- in the book [5] describing some coins of the Bank al-Maghrib collection (page 92),
- in this article (see Fig. 5 and Fig. 6).

The reading of the mint name is not very easy on these coins and it could be written *تلمسين* (*Tilimsīn*) as well as *تلمسان* (*Tilimsān*)<sup>23</sup>. However, a close inspection of the coin shown in this article (which seems to be the best of the three above-mentioned examples in this aspect) makes the spelling *تلمسين* (*Tilimsīn*) more probable. It is the spelling I have chosen for this article and it was also Eustache's choice [9].

The obverse bears the name of 'Abd al-Wahhāb. It can be translated by "Ordered by 'Abd al-Wahhāb":

<sup>23</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Lutz Ilisch, curator of the collection of Oriental coins of the University of Tübingen, for having alerted me to these two possibilities.

مما امر  
به عبد  
الوهاب

The reverse bears the mint name and can be translated by “This fals was struck in Tilimsīn”:

ضرب  
هذا الفلس  
بتلمسين

The legends on this fals can be illustrated by the following drawing:

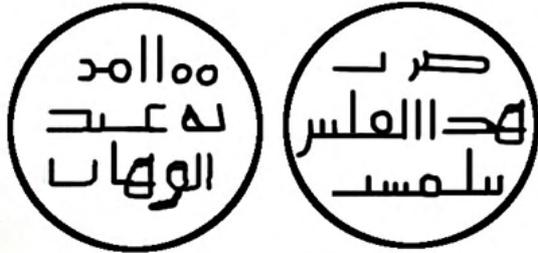


Fig. 3: A fals struck by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in Tilimsīn

A single example shown in this article (3.81 g and 17 x 16 mm; Fig. 4):



Fig. 4: Obverse and reverse of a fals struck by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in Tilimsīn

## 2. A debatable attribution to the ‘Abbasids

According to Eustache [9], these coins were struck by the ‘Abbasids in the period AH 155 – 172 (AD 772 – 778) because:

- AH 155 (AD 772) is the year of the death of the military chief of the Ibādīte community, Abū Ḥātim, and the beginning of the ‘Abbasid occupation of Ifriqiya by Yazīd ibn Ḥātim,
- AH 172 (AD 778) is the date when Idrīs I entered Volubilis (Wāliā).

Eustache writes<sup>24</sup> that, between these two dates, the ‘Abbasids had garrisons in Tiharat and Tilimsīn. It seems to be a well-established historical fact for him for which he does not adduce any justification. One may remark that Tiharat and Tilimsīn were not involved in the events reported in AH 155 (AD 772). They took place in a more eastern part of the Maghrib<sup>25</sup>.

I think that the attribution of these two coins to the ‘Abbasids can be debated because it seems that Tiharat and Tilimsīn were never occupied by the ‘Abbasids. The occupation of Tiharat or Tilimsīn by the ‘Abbasids is not reported or mentioned by Abu Zakariya [2], Ibn al-Athir [11], the Bayan [12], Ibn Khaldun [13] and many others.

More generally, the most westernly ‘Abbasid positions were in the eastern part of Algeria, which does not include Tiharat and Tilimsīn (see Fig. 5). According to Abun-Nasr<sup>26</sup>: “...The army commanded by Ibn al-Ash’ath, which invaded the Maghrib in 761,

brought the political domination of the Ibadites in Tunisia, eastern Algeria, and Tripolitania to an end and established ‘Abbasid authority there... The mountainous territory of the Zab in eastern Algeria constituted the western limit of the area held by the ‘Abbasid governors. There the ‘Abbasids had an important military base at Tubna...”.

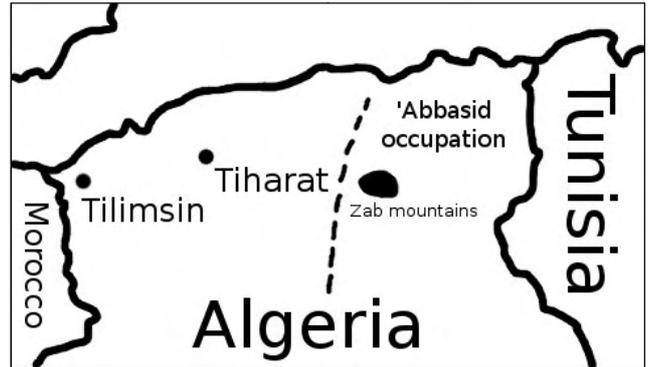


Fig. 5: A simplified map of Algeria showing the most westerly ‘Abbasid occupation: Tilimsīn and Tiharat are situated outside the area controlled by the ‘Abbasids

A western frontier of the ‘Abbasid authority situated in the Zab region is also mentioned in the book by Chikh Békri (he cites Al-Ya‘qubi’s *Kitab al Buldan* in [6] page 53).

Thus, the attribution of these two fulus to the ‘Abbasids can be challenged and the next section shows that an attribution to the Rustamids is credible and highly probable.

## 3. An attribution to the Rustamid, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb

The Rustamid Imamate (AH 160 – 296 / AD 777 – 909)<sup>27</sup> was founded in AH 160 (AD 777) by ‘Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Rustam (AH 160 – 168 / AD 777 – 784)<sup>28</sup> who was a convert to the Ibādī movement (a branch of Kharijism). The capital was Tiharat (the new Tiharat<sup>29</sup>) in Algeria. In AH 296 (AD 909), the capital, Tiharat, was conquered<sup>30</sup> by the Berber tribe of the Kutamas (allies of the propagandist, Abū ‘Abd Allah, who had installed the Fatimid dynasty<sup>31</sup>). Its inhabitants were killed or exiled. The refugees went to the Algerian Mzab and it was the end of the Rustamid dynasty. According to Ibn Khaldun<sup>32</sup>, Tiharat was definitely destroyed in AH 620 (AD 1223) or around AH 630 (AD 1232).

The Rustamids attained their peak under the reign of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (AH 168 – 208 / AD 784 – 824)<sup>33</sup> and, according to Ibn Saghīr [14], under his reign, the Rustamid Imamate extended from Tilimsīn to the limit of Tripoli.

It is possible to claim that the two fulus under consideration in this article were struck by the Rustamid, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, in Tiharat and Tilimsīn because:

- both coins bear the name of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,

<sup>27</sup> Abun-Nasr gives the year AH 160 (AD 776 – 777) for the proclamation of ‘Abd ar-Rahmān ibn Rustam as Imam ([1] page 43). Zerouki ([17] page 22) gives the year AH 161 for this proclamation and Bosworth ([7] page 27) gives also the year AH 161 (AD 778) for the beginning of the Rustamid Imamate. Depending on the event chosen to date the beginning of the Rustamid dynasty, the date AH 144 (AD 761) has also been proposed. However, all historians and sources give the year AH 296 (AD 909) for the fall of this dynasty.

<sup>28</sup> Abun-Nasr [1] page 43 and page 45, the Bayan [12] page 283, Zerouki [17] page 151.

<sup>29</sup> More precisely (Bosworth [7] pages 27-28, Ibn Khaldun [13] page 183, Zerouki [17] pages 23-24), a new Tiharat was founded in AH 144 (AD 761) a few kilometers away from an already existing Tiharat (Old Tiharat). The modern town of Tiaret is situated on Old Tiharat; New Tiharat is now in ruins.

<sup>30</sup> Abun-Nasr [1] page 48, Ibn Khaldun [13] page 183, Julien [15] page 393.

<sup>31</sup> Bosworth [7] pages 27-28, Julien [15] pages 389-393.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Khaldun [13] page 184 and page 864.

<sup>33</sup> The Bayan [12] page 283, Békri [6] page 29, Zerouki [17] page 129 and page 151.

<sup>24</sup> Eustache [9] page 349.

<sup>25</sup> A summary of these events can be found in Julien [15] pages 364-366.

<sup>26</sup> Abun-Nasr [1] page 41.

- under ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, Tilimsīn was the western frontier of the Rustamid Imamate,
- the capital of the Rustamids was Tīharat,
- Zerouki has shown<sup>34</sup> that the spelling of the name “Tīharat” varied with times and sources. He shows that Ibn Saghīr, who lived in Rustamid Tīharat<sup>35</sup>, exclusively wrote تيهرت for Tīharat. This spelling is the one which can be found on the coins.

Furthermore, the style of these two fulus is similar to that of an unpublished fals (see Fig. 6) which can be attributed to Idrīs bin Idrīs in Wālīla (Volubilis, Morocco). Idrīs bin Idrīs was the second Idrisid ruler and the capital of the Idrisids was Wālīla. There is no contradiction in this similarity because Idrīs bin Idrīs and the Rustamid, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, ruled in the same period of time (AH 187 – 213 / AD 803 – 828) and (AH 168 – 208 / AD 784 – 824) respectively).

This fals is shown in Fig. 6 (2.28 g and 14 mm). It obverse bears the name of Idrīs bin Idrīs. It can be translated by “Ordered by Idrīs bin Idrīs”:

مما امر  
به ادريس  
بن ادريس

The reverse bears the mint name and can be translated by “This fals has been struck in Wālīla”:

ضرب  
هذا الفلوس  
بوليلة



Fig. 6: Obverse and reverse of a fals struck by Idrīs bin Idrīs in Wālīla

#### 4. Conclusion

This article has shown two different fulus struck by the Rustamid, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (AH 168 – 208 / AD 784 – 824), in Tīharat and Tilimsīn (Tiaret and Tlemcen in Algeria).

The fals from Tilimsīn can be dated the period AH 168 – 198 because this town was controlled by the Idrisids from AH 199<sup>36</sup>.

It has also been written<sup>37</sup> that Tilimsīn was conquered earlier by the first Idrisid ruler (Idrīs) in AH 174 (AD 790). According to Eustache<sup>38</sup>, this taking of Tilimsīn by Idrīs in the year AH 174 (AD 790) can be challenged (it seems to him to have been reported to embellish the history of his reign). This important remark is based on the existence<sup>39</sup> of rare dirhams which are *non-Idrisid* struck in Tilimsīn in the years AH 180, AH 191 and the year AH 198. The attribution of these dirhams to a particular ruler or a particular tribe is still a problem to be solved (they could have been struck by the Rustamids but it is simply an assumption). The history of Tilimsīn in these years is far from being entirely known.

<sup>34</sup> Zerouki [17] page 27.

<sup>35</sup> Abun-Nasr [1] page 45.

<sup>36</sup> Eustache [10] page 136, Ibn Khaldun [13] page 867.

<sup>37</sup> For example, see Ibn Khaldun [13] page 785.

<sup>38</sup> Eustache [10] page 136.

<sup>39</sup> Album [3] T434 page 76, Eustache [10] page 136, Al-Maskukat Journal [4] and Nakshabandi [16].

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Example B (1.96 g and 15 x 16 mm):



Fig. 7: Obverse and reverse of example B

Example C (2.29 g and 16 mm):



Fig. 8: Obverse and reverse of example C

# THE IDENTITY OF EUCRATIDES AND THE FALL OF AĪ KHANOUM

By Jens Jakobsson

## Introduction

This article presents new evidence for reattributing the so-called commemorative coins of Eucratides I of Bactria (perhaps c. 170/165-146/141 BC), arguing that they were in fact struck by Heliocles and Laodice, soon after Eucratides' death. This reattribution provides a new perspective on Eucratides' identity, and also suggests that Aī Khanoum was first sacked as a consequence of the civil war following his death.

## The Heliocles & Laodice Coins

The Bactrian kings Antimachus I and Agathocles are known for their commemorative coins of earlier kings in Bactria (see Fig. 1).



Fig 1: Commemorative tetradrachm of Agathocles for Alexander the Great. ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΥ "of Alexander [son] of Philip / ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΟΝΤΟΣ ΑΓΑΘΟΚΛΕΥΣ ΔΙΚΑΟΥ "off/in the reign of Agathocles the Just".  
(photo courtesy of Osmund Bopearachchi)

Their successor, Eucratides I, has also been credited with commemorative coins, for a couple named Heliocles and Laodice. Hollis<sup>40</sup> has summarised the established interpretation:

"The other extraordinary coin struck by Eucratides, probably at the same time, was a silver tetradrachm commemorating his parents. On the obverse side we see their conjugate busts with the legend ΗΛΙΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΗΣ, and on the reverse the king himself, helmeted with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΣ ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΗΣ. Normally, of course, the king's name will appear in the genitive case; here there can be no doubt that we are meant to understand the complete inscription as King Eucratides the Great, [son of] Heliocles and Laodice."



Fig. 2: Tetradrachm with Eucratides / Heliocles and Laodice. Triton X, lot 455  
(photo courtesy CNG)

Heliocles is apparently not royal, whereas Laodice wears a diadem (see Fig.2). Building on this interpretation, the Bactrian

<sup>40</sup> Hollis (1996). Some scholars have also regarded the series as commemorative coins issued by Eucratides for his son's wedding. The coins are Bopearachchi (1991), *Eucratide I* series 13-16.

king Heliocles I was seen as Eucratides' son, named after his grandfather. Early scholars also noted that Laodice was a Seleucid name, and from this created an elaborate hypothesis where Eucratides was a Seleucid prince who overthrew Demetrius I. This was of course the cause of a major disagreement between Tarn and Narain.

However, the idea that these coins were issued by Eucratides is likely incorrect. It is, as Hollis explains, based on a 'continuous' reading of both legends as one sentence. Mark Passchl and I have presented numerous objections.<sup>41</sup>

- A continuous arrangement would have been unique for Hellenistic coins; an engraver applying such a novelty would likely have taken care not to omit the genitive/filiation marker (where the father's name is in the nominative case, simply the aspirated Greek letter O) "[son] of".<sup>42</sup> Moreover, Greek coins almost invariably announced the issuing authority – whether a king, a magistrate or a city – in the genitive case. Eucratides' name is in the nominative case.<sup>43</sup> We assume that a reader familiar with Greek coins would have identified Heliocles' and Laodice's names, which are in the genitive case, and surmised that the coin belonged to them.
- These coins were issued as tetradrachms and drachms, and so were regular coinage rather than commemorative medals.
- The diadem was not a symbol of royal birth, but of royal office – analogous to the crown today. If Laodice had been married to the non-royal Heliocles, she would not have worn a diadem. Also, it was most unusual for Hellenistic kings to marry their daughters to non-royalties. For the Seleucids, it was completely unknown.
- Heliocles sometimes resembles king Heliocles I, but not Eucratides. (see figs. 2 and 3).
- Also, Holt (1984) has proven that the coins were among Eucratides' later issues, and not issued to promote his ancestry in competition with the commemorative coins of Agathocles and Antimachus I. Two monograms – Bopearachchi (1991) nr. 109 and 159<sup>44</sup> – were used for this series.



Fig. 3: Tetradrachm of Heliocles I. Electronic auction 229: lot 535.  
(photo courtesy CNG)

In our alternative view, these coins were struck by Heliocles<sup>45</sup> and queen Laodice (Eucratides' widow), after the death of Eucratides I

<sup>41</sup> Jakobsson, 2007. Originally Mark's idea.

<sup>42</sup> Filiation markers are sometimes omitted in inscriptions, but that was in a well-established form. On Agathocles' commemorative coin for Alexander the Great, it is present: ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΥ, Alexander's (son's) of Philip's. See Fig. 1.

<sup>43</sup> For example, ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ, signifying that this was Alexander's coin. Greek understanding of the written word was more literal than ours.

<sup>44</sup> Monograms 109 and 159 were used on early Eucratides silver coins (diademed, without Megas epiclesis) as well as later (with Megas epiclesis, helmeted). 109 also appeared on Eucratides' life-time tetradrachms with spear-throwing pose and Megas epiclesis (Series 8).

<sup>45</sup> Heliocles was apparently a close relative of the queen, as women in Greek antiquity were never portrayed with unrelated men.

(thus probably in the 140s BC), using his name to legitimise their own rule. But as the series is unique, any interpretation of the legends remains conjectural. We would need coins with analogous legend arrangements (genitive case on one side – nominative on another) in a known context, before we could predict with any certainty how Greek readers would have interpreted them. And in the few cases where Hellenistic ruler names appear in the nominative case, this is perhaps due to contamination from Latin, or insufficient skills in the Greek language. An otherwise interesting case of Armenian joint coins should clearly not be read continuously, but possibly falls into this category.<sup>46</sup>

However, I have found a candidate in a properly Hellenised context, from Commagene, a small kingdom north of Syria. The early kings issued a limited coinage with Greek legends, but soon became Roman vassals. When the king Antiochus III died in AD 17, Commagene became a Roman province. However, in AD 38, his son, Antiochus IV, became king over Commagene and Cilicia, a region with many Hellenistic cities, thanks to personal contacts with the Roman emperors. A numerous bronze coinage was issued in his name, but the mints in Antiochus' kingdom were still controlled by local authorities, who had previously issued civic coins.

Cf. the city of Selinus: Bronze, bust of Antiochus / Apollo standing. Legend: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΣ "Antiochus the Great King" / ΚΕΑΙΝΟΥ ΚΙΩΝ "of the Selinians"

Region of Commagene:



Fig. 4

Bronzes, bust of Antiochus / Scorpion within wreath. Legend on larger coins for instance:

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΣ "Antiochus the Great King" / ΚΟΜΜΑΓΗΝΩΝ "of the Commageneans"<sup>47</sup> (See Fig. 4).

The political context was apparently not identical in Commagene and Bactria, but the grammatical arrangement was similar. The local authorities had manufactured the coins, while the king was honoured or "featured" (just as Roman officials could appear on civic coins with their names in the nominative case). It was taken for granted that the Greek-speaking recipients would *not* read the obverse and reverse as one coherent sentence, and there is no evidence that Hellenistic coins were read that way.

### The identity of Eukratides

If we accept that the Heliocles and Laodice coins were post-Eucratides issues, no information about Eucratides' parents

remains. We must also abandon the idea that Eucratides came to power in Bactria as a rebel against Demetrius I or his son. This is a misinterpretation of a conflict between Eucratides and a "Demetrius, king of the Indians", mentioned by Justin (*Epitome*, XLI:6). The conflict has been treated elsewhere, but a brief recapitulation is due. Justin apparently placed this conflict towards the end of Eucratides' reign, after he had "carried on several wars". Demetrius I, son of Euthydemus I, had disappeared before Eucratides even came to power. An Indian ruler, Demetrius III Aniketos, could be dated to the middle of Menander's reign in India, but not earlier than 150 BC, and thus is a good candidate. An alternative would be that Justin referred to Demetrius II, who may have been among Eucratides' successors, or possibly overlapped with his last years. Demetrius II issued Bactrian coins, but possibly belonged to the same "Indian" dynasty as Menander.<sup>48</sup>

When Eucratides came to power, there was no Demetrius active – Agathocles and Antimachus I were kings in Bactria before him. There are no overstrikes from this period, so Eucratides' accession was perhaps not even turbulent. Wilson (2006) has studied the transition between the coinage of these two rulers and Eucratides' first issues, concurring that Eucratides could have taken over mints of either of these two kings, and may possibly have reopened an abandoned mint of Euthydemus I.

The few clues to Eucratides' identity may indicate that he was a member of a royal Bactrian house. Firstly, Justin compares him to Mithradates I of Parthia, who was brother of Phraates I, the previous Parthian king, and Justin is known for his attempts at presenting parallelisms. Secondly, Eucratides consistently used the Dioscuri brothers – Castor and Polydeuces – as his symbols. Among Hellenistic kings, the Dioscuri were never used as a dynastic patron deity on silver coins; they were often a symbol of *philadelphia*, brotherly love<sup>49</sup> (see Table 1), or of military strength; they also appear on bronzes honouring local cults. It is therefore possible that Eucratides was a brother of either Agathocles, Antimachus I or Apollodotus (king of India at the time), but more important is that there is little evidence that he was more of a usurper than either of them.

### The Seleucid name Laodice

As for the identity of Laodice, Tarn had a valid point: Laodice's name strongly indicates Seleucid origin. Against this, Narain (1957, p. 74) argued that the name was common in other Hellenistic dynasties as well. But Laodice, the name of Seleucus Nicator's mother, was to our knowledge used only by princesses who were his descendants. The name was introduced in Seleucid vassal dynasties in Cappadocia and Pontus<sup>50</sup> (and later

<sup>48</sup> See Bopearachchi (1991) for Demetrius I, but Kraay (1995) and Wilson (2004) for the late dating of Demetrius II: Demetrius II's coins were not found in Ai Khanoum, his monograms tie in with Eucratides' late types, there are portrait contaminations between him and Heliocles I (c.145-130 BC), and, like all Bactrian rulers after Eucratides, Demetrius II issued no bronzes. As for Demetrius III, I (Jakobsson 2009, 2010a & b) and L.M. Wilson (2010) have presented numismatic indications that place this king as a contemporary of Menander. The alternative (Bopearachchi, 1991) has been to place him as late as 100 BC.

Many works do, however, still refer to interpretations of Justin where Eucratides rebelled against either Demetrius I or his son, Demetrius II. But that is a case of authors not reading up on modern numismatic material, rather than a scholarly debate.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* VI. Polydeuces was a deity, son of Zeus, and Castor a *hero*, his twin half-brother by a mortal father.

<sup>50</sup> Grainger (2009), pp. 47-50, records perhaps 16 royal Laodices. Laodice (2) was a daughter of Achaeus the older, presumably a relative of Seleucus I. Grainger suggests that Laodice (13) was a daughter of king Ziaelas of Bithynia (who was not a Seleucid vassal) and married to Antiochus Hierax, but this is a conflation of two sources. Eusebius (from Porphyry of Tyre, ad p. 252) relates that Antiochus Hierax, after the battle of Ancyra in 239 BC, married an unnamed daughter of Ziaelas. Polybius (*Histories*, 5. 74. 4-5) mentions how a *parthenos* called Laodice, somehow associated with Hierax, was raised by one of his friends after the king had died (in the 220s BC). This Laodice was perhaps Hierax' daughter. Ziaelas' daughter cannot still have been a girl when Hierax died. (Thanks to Renzo Lucherini for

<sup>46</sup> The Armenian queen Erato was sister of Tigran IV and ruled jointly with Tigran V, a Herodian prince whom the Romans had installed (c. AD 6-12). Erato had forced herself to share the throne with native support, and demonstrably called herself "Sister of King Tigran" in the genitive case on one side of the coin, flaunting her relation to a senior king, while Tigran V is left with his legend in the nominative case on the other side. It would be tempting to interpret this as a sign of Erato's control over the coinage, but after her death, later joint coins of Tigran V and Augustus were issued with legends in the nominative case on *both* sides. See Nercessian (1995), p. 87.

<sup>47</sup> Coins of Antiochus IV from Nercessian (1995), pp. 92-99, including civic coinage of Commagene (with legend ΚΟΜΜΑΓΗΝΩΝ). Legends abbreviated on smaller denominations. There were similar coins for his queen Iotape and two sons, some with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΚΙΩΝ "The King's Sons" / "of [the Commageneans etc.]. The latter type makes it even grammatically impossible that the legends should be read continuously.

Commagene) after their kings married Seleucid princesses. As it is unlikely that these local rulers in their turn sent princesses to Bactria, the most likely origins of her name are thus:

- a) The name Laodice was used in Bactria from its independence, as the dynasty of Diodotus I was related to the Seleucids. The possibility of a third king, named Antiochus (Nicator), in Diodotus' dynasty, may indicate such a relationship. See Jakobsson, (2010a).
- b) Demetrius I of Bactria married a daughter of Antiochus III in 206 BC (Polybius, *Histories*, 11.34), and Laodice was their descendant.

Justin, *Epitome* XLI:6, relates how Eucratides was killed by his son and joint-regent. While Justin gives no reason for the son's resentment, similar familial conflicts usually had one common cause: Hellenistic princesses were routinely married off to seal dynastic alliances, which led to multiple marriages and predictable familial feuds. After Philip II tried to kill Alexander (but fell over drunkenly) at the very wedding to a younger queen, Hellenistic history has recorded at least five<sup>51</sup> almost identical conflicts where older queens and their offspring were pushed aside or feared to be.

Hence, Laodice was likely Eucratides' second queen, not mother of the parricide son. Because of the strong resemblances between coins of Heliocles I Dikaios and Agathocles Dikaios (both use the patron deity of standing Zeus), it seems suitable to associate the couple with Agathocles. Agathocles went to great lengths to associate himself with the earlier Bactrian rulers, by issuing commemorative coins for six of them. Whether Agathocles was himself a maternal Seleucid descendant or married a princess who was so is unknown; in either case calling a daughter Laodice would have been in accordance with his ambitions to appear as the legitimate king.<sup>52</sup>

### The end of Ai Khanoum

Ai Khanoum, on the Oxus River in northernmost Bactria, was invaded by nomads in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, and abandoned without much fighting<sup>53</sup>. It seems as though this first invasion (a later attack would force the looters away, leaving stacks of melted down gold ingots) took place at the time of Eucratides' death (perhaps c. 146-140 BC), as almost no coins of later rulers were found in the ruins. The exceptions were a few coins in the Ai Khanoum IV hoard, according to Holt (1981):

- a) An Indian drachm of the late Indo-Greek king, Lysias, was likely an intrusion: the hoard was demonstrably contaminated.
- b) A tetradrachm of Eucratides II. This I regard as possibly genuine: Eucratides II was likely the son, and joint-regent, of Eucratides I, and so would have minted coins at least from the year that his father died.
- c) Though Holt does not regard them as post-Eucratides, there were two coins of Heliocles and Laodice. These were presumably also minted shortly after Eucratides I died.

The archaeological and numismatic record might match the sole source on the decline of Bactria, Justin XLI:6: "*But as he*

clarifying this.) Laodice (16), the sister of Alexander Balas, was perhaps an impostor.

<sup>51</sup> Ptolemy I, Lysimachus, Nicomedes of Bithynia and Antiochus I all disowned /killed their oldest son after remarrying; Antiochus II was probably poisoned by his senior queen.

<sup>52</sup> Diodotus I & II, Antiochus Nicator, Pantaleon, Euthydemus I, Demetrius I – and also Alexander the Great. While the exact relationships may never be revealed, it is clear that Agathocles claimed some relation to the kings he commemorated. (Except Alexander – but references to him were ubiquitous.) Hellenistic kingship was usually dynastic to its nature. See Jakobsson (2007), pp. 57-60. Possibly Demetrius III, who also used a reverse of Zeus standing, was Agathocles' son.

<sup>53</sup> Holt (Lost World, ch.5). Information about the Ai Khanoum excavations originally from Bernard (1973).

[*Eucratides I*] was returning from the country [India], he was killed on his march by his son, with whom he had shared his throne". Hence, the murder took place while the Bactrian army was in the south, marching northwards. This might explain why Ai Khanoum, on the northern frontier, was weakly defended at this time. We should assume that Eucratides' court – including his queen – did not take kindly to the murder, and that this event triggered a civil war.<sup>54</sup> It is possible that Ai Khanoum was Eucratides' capital, and thus residence of the court – the large number of Indian coins or bullion attested in the royal treasure suggests that Ai Khanoum was an important administrative centre.<sup>55</sup> But in any case, queen Laodice and Heliocles may have issued coins there, opposing the parricide son in southern Bactria. It is remarkable that Heliocles did not declare himself king, but this could be explained by relating it to a well-documented event. Several sources agree that Mithradates I was so successful that he extended his kingdom as far as India. Perhaps Heliocles and Laodice preferred to submit to the Parthians, in the hope of support against the parricide son, as well as protection from nomad invasions.<sup>56</sup> However, from the mid-140s BC to 138 BC, Mithradates had to concentrate his resources on wars against the Elymaeans and Seleucids.

Moreover, with the main army controlled by another faction, there may not have been enough troops to defend Ai Khanoum; perhaps that was why the city was abandoned. The monograms on the Heliocles and Laodice coins both disappeared and so likely belonged to the Ai Khanoum mint. On their coins with spear-throwing portrait (*see fig. 2*) the torso of Eucratides is clumsily cut off to provide space for the additional legend. This indicates a hastily struck series rather than a commemorative issue of Eucratides, mightiest of Bactrian kings. They would have made a poor companion to the splendour of the Eucratidion, the 169 g gold medal that celebrated his own greatness.

What happened to Laodice we cannot tell, but her relative, Heliocles, eventually became king. After the fall of Bactria, his dynasty continued south of the Hindu Kush, with kings such as Heliocles II Dikaios<sup>57</sup>. The Indo-Greek Zeus kings have often been regarded as descendants of Eucratides I, but they never repeat his name or his epithet Megas. These last arguments also confirm that Heliocles and Laodice were not Eucratides' parents, an idea that may have clouded our understanding of Bactrian history.

**Table 1.** Appearance of the Dioscuroi on silver reverses of Hellenistic rulers.

Ruler	Philadelphia connection
Eumenes II of Pergamum <sup>58</sup> 197-159 BC	Certain. The love between Eumenes II and his brothers was well attested <sup>59</sup> .

<sup>54</sup> There were several successors to Eucratides I in Bactria: Eucratides II, Plato, Demetrius II and Heliocles I. Further, none of them were able to exert any control over India – Eucratides' mints south of the Hindu Kush were taken over by Zoilus I (*see Jakobsson, 2009*). This suggests that Eucratides' empire was shattered by internal fighting soon after his death.

<sup>55</sup> See Lerner (2010), pp. 71-72, for the Indian treasures.

<sup>56</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, 11.9-11 states how the Parthians at some point took parts of Bactria for themselves. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of history*, 33.18, explicitly says that Mithridates I ruled as far as India without having to wage wars. Also Justin, *Epitome*, 41.6, possibly speaks of the extension of Mithridates' dominions into Bactria. No coins of Mithradates have been found in Bactria, so he presumably ruled through vassals – such as the non-royal Heliocles. Laodice's status is ambiguous. She did not call herself queen on the coins, (doing so would have overshadowed Heliocles) but still wore her diadem: but she was a widow, and to force her to renounce her royal status would have brought Mithradates little goodwill. As Heliocles was not king, the couple could not use the phrase ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΟΝΤΟΣ like Agathocles and Antimachus I did.

<sup>57</sup> See Jakobsson (2007) for a comment on this.

<sup>58</sup> [B. M. C., *Mys.*, p. 117; cf. *Z. f. N.*, xxiv. p. 118.]

<sup>59</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* VI:5. The Attalids even founded a city called Philadelphia.

<b>Timarchus of Media</b> c.160 BC	<b>Likely.</b> The Seleucid satrap Timarchus, who rebelled against Demetrius I in Media, was the younger brother of Heracleides, minister of the treasury for Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who had just been sacked by Demetrius <sup>60</sup> After Timarchus was defeated, Heracleides promoted the cause of Alexander Balas against Demetrius.
<b>Antiochus VI</b> 144-c.142 BC	<b>Uncertain.</b> The infant Antiochus VI might have had half-brothers (Antiochus VIII), or possibly even brothers (Alexander II Zabinas, if he was not an impostor). But more likely, the Dioscuroi were symbols of the Seleucid army, or represented Antiochus VI and his ward Diodotus Tryphon, who held the actual power.
<b>Diomedes, Indo-Greek king</b> c.100 BC	<b>Likely.</b> Diomedes succeeded to Philoxenus, and adapted his coin portraits from his, looking slightly younger on their best coins <sup>61</sup> . Philoxenus' symbol was a single horseman; Diomedes used the Dioscuroi on horseback.

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My Thanks to Mark Passchl.

## TWO NEW INDO-SCYTHIAN COINS

By R. Senior

The Indo-Scythian kings Azes and Azilises issued some extensive silver coinages between them and by noting the monograms and field letters found on them one can identify groups that are related, and sequences of issue. Sometimes the coinage type is particularly rare and not enough examples have survived for a proper classification. One such type is the issue S52 of Azilises [Indo-Scythian Coins and History pub. by CNG 2001] which has a mounted king with spear obverse and City deity with palm and brazier reverse. The reverse also has a large Greek letter Sigma in the left field and Kharosthi *Si* on the right.

Two series can be identified, those coins using square Greek omicra on the obverse and those using round ones. In ISCH, I noted S52.1 for the former and S52.2 for the latter. At that time I had not seen any of the latter coins with exergual letters on the obverse and only one example of S52.1 with an exergual letter – to which I gave the number S52.3

Now, an example of S52.2 has surfaced with an exergual letter:



1) 27mm 9.77g 12h - CNG Triton XVII lot 452 as S52.2T with round omicra but with exergual letter - *Ga*

A new example of S52.1 with square omicra, but with an exergual letter, as S52.3 which also has a pellet in the right reverse field above the palm streamers, has also surfaced. The obverse exergual letter is unpublished – *Mu* – but more interesting is the fact that, below the reverse letter *Si*, one finds another letter – it resembles a Greek N but is possibly also a *Mu*. On my original S52.3 I had noted an extra piece of what I thought must be drapery in this same position but now I can see that it, too, is actually a letter *Mu*.

One can expect that more examples of this issue of Azilises will surface in time and one should then note the obverse exergual letters linked to both the round omicron and square omicron varieties. In the latter case the question will be whether all those coins have the pellet top reverse right and whether the letter below *Si* is always *Mu*, or a group of different letters.



2) 27mm 9.22 gm 12h as S52.1T with square omicra, but exergual letter *Mu* and *Mu*? below *Si* on the reverse.

<sup>60</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 31.27 and Appian, *Syriake* 45 and 47. Timarchus' Dioscuroi coins were copied from Eucratides'.

<sup>61</sup> Coins from Bopearachchi (1991).

# ARDASHIR 1 KUSHANSHAH AND VASUDEVA THE KUSHAN: NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE FOR THE DATE OF THE KUSHAN KING, KANISHKA I

by Nikolaus Schindel

Some years ago, I published a short note<sup>62</sup> in this journal in which I suggested that the semicircular object depicted on the reverses of copper coins of the Kushano-Sasanian ruler Ardashir 2<sup>63</sup> in the context of an investiture scene is a Kushan form last worn by Huvishka in the first half of his reign.<sup>64</sup> Later Kushan kings wear a triangular crown with a dotted design, which is also shown on a Kushano-Sasanian coin.<sup>65</sup> I used this as an isolated, but still relevant argument against dating the famous Year One of the Kushan King Kanishka I to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Rather, I suggested that the use of this specific crown in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD indicates that Huvishka reigned approximately at this time, i.e. much later than the commonly used (but still unproven) suggestion of AD 127 as Year One would have it.

While preparing a monograph on hoards of Late Kushan and Kushano-Sasanian copper coins,<sup>66</sup> which will also address the chronological problems of these coinages in a more comprehensive and detailed form, I came across a minor pictorial detail in the coinage of Ardashir 1, the second early Kushano-Sasanian ruler, which might offer another clue that the 127 date of Kanishka's Year One is more problematic than is generally believed. Admittedly, it is a very minor detail, namely the depiction of the altar and its flames on the obverse. Still, I believe that it might be important. Before discussing it, and its implications, a few words on the coin types as such are necessary. The type in question is number 1114 according to Robert Göbl's monumental study on Kushan coinage.<sup>67</sup> Göbl read the name in the obverse legend as BOBOPO,<sup>68</sup> like other researchers before him,<sup>69</sup> while Cribb claimed that the name is rather ARAOPO.<sup>70</sup> Having examined a fairly large sample of maybe 40 coins myself, I feel confident that the question now can be settled for good: the ideal form really is ARAOPO KOPONO PAO, thus supporting Cribb's reading. I think that there can be little doubt that the Ardashir depicted on these Bactrian-inscribed coins is the same ruler who issued Pehlevi coins very much following Sasanian patterns in Marw.<sup>71</sup> The crown consisting of three floral elements which resemble, but in fact do not represent, mural elements, is also the same on both issues. Due to the use of Bactrian, MK 1114 was probably struck in Bactria, and in the capital Balkh, itself.<sup>72</sup> We know Sasanian drachms of Vahram I (273–276) bearing the mint name BHL in Pehlevi.<sup>73</sup> While the Ardashir 1 (and 2) copper coins are certainly

earlier than the main group of Kushano-Sasanian issues,<sup>74</sup> they are also considerably later than the reigns of the Sasanian Kings of Kings Ardashir I (224–240) and Shapur I (240–272).<sup>75</sup> Suffice it to repeat that both Kushano-Sasanian rulers wear a prominent earring, a feature introduced into Sasanian numismatics only under Hormizd I (271/2–273). Since many obverses of Ardashir 1's Pehlevi copper coins bear the mint signature ML or MLW,<sup>76</sup> we can infer that they were struck in Marw. From the archaeological excavations in this city, we know local copper issues of Ardashir I and Shapur I.<sup>77</sup> They are totally different from the Kushano-Sasanian coins in every respect, especially when it comes to style and the fabric of the flans. Therefore, it is impossible for them to have been contemporary. The use of a mint signature in front of the bust has a direct parallel on early drachms of Vahram II from Marw.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, I am confident that Ardashir 1 and 2 belong to the chronological layer of Vahram I and II in Iran, that is to say that they date to the 270s AD. Attributing them to the reign of either Ardashir I or Shapur I is impossible, I believe, on numismatic grounds.

Now, let us return to the pictorial detail on which this paper shall focus. Like many Kushan and Kushano-Sasanian coins, the obverse of MK 1114 shows the ruler sacrificing over an altar. What is most remarkable and has not yet, as far as I can see, been commented upon is the fact that the usual depiction of the altar flames canonical since the beginning of the reign of the Kushan King Vasudeva I,<sup>79</sup> and always present also on all Kushano-Sasanian issues which employ this basic obverse type, are missing here (figs. 1, 2).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Let us have a closer look at this. When Vasudeva I followed Huvishka as Kushan king, he chose an obverse type basically following the model of Kanishka I,<sup>80</sup> as well as of the copper issues of the latter's father, Vima Kadphises.<sup>81</sup> While these two rulers are shown wearing a kaftan, however, Vasudeva wears full armour. Another minor difference is the altar: while its basic form (one lower element, altar shaft, altar table) remains the same, the obverses of Vasudeva I always shows stylised flames above the altar table, which are lacking on the coins of Vima Kadphises and Kanishka. Usually, these flames are shown with one stroke going to upper left, and one to the upper right, on the left and right edge of the altar table respectively. Over the middle area of the altar table, usually the king's hand is shown, so there is no place for

<sup>62</sup> Schindel 2009.

<sup>63</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 114, no. 1029.

<sup>64</sup> Loeschner 2010, no. 2 publishes a coin with a slightly different crown form, and deduces from this single specimen that "it is not of a Kushan type". Since he does not take into account the much more commonly attested form discussed in Schindel 2009, and limits his discussion to this one single apodictic sentence, I have to confess that I fail to be impressed. One is mildly amused by the statements in Falk 2012, p. 134 f., who not only shows a quite peculiar sense for academic discussion, but also mistakes Shapur I for Ardashir 2 Kushanshah.

<sup>65</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 28–60.

<sup>66</sup> Schindel (in preparation 1).

<sup>67</sup> Göbl 1984.

<sup>68</sup> Göbl 1984, p. 83, pl. XIV; Göbl 1993, p. 47.

<sup>69</sup> Herzfeld 1998, p. 29; Bivar 1956, p. 22, 31 f.; Brunner 1974, p. 159.

<sup>70</sup> Cribb 1990, p. 154, 186; Carter 1985.

<sup>71</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 114, no. 1028.

<sup>72</sup> A fuller discussion of Kushano-Sasanian mints can be found in Schindel (in preparation 1).

<sup>73</sup> Alram/Gyslen 2012, p. 189, pl. 12, no. A55, first published and discussed within the context of Kushano-Sasanian numismatics in the highly useful article by Nikitin 1999.

<sup>74</sup> Schindel 2005; Schindel 2012; also in Cribb 1990, p. 171. Ardashir is the earliest ruler in the Kushano-Sasanian series.

<sup>75</sup> Schindel 2005; Schindel 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Carter 1985.

<sup>77</sup> Loginov/Nikitin 1993; Alram/Gyselen 2003, p. 178 f., pl. 19, no. 259.

<sup>78</sup> Alram/Gyselen 2012, p. 265 f., pl. 23, no. A73 f., p. 50–59.

<sup>79</sup> Göbl 1984, 28, 104.

<sup>80</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 4–9, 74–82.

<sup>81</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 72 f.

flames, even if a few coins show small flames on the entire surface of the altar table.<sup>82</sup> The depiction of the flames can be encountered in all five Kushan mints operating – according to Göbl – from the reign of Vasudeva I onwards,<sup>83</sup> so it does not merely represent a local phenomenon. The altar flames are always depicted also on Kushano-Sasanian coins which show the full figure of the king on the obverse: on the gold dinars from Balkh,<sup>84</sup> on the Bactrian small copper coins of Peroz 2 (fig. 3) and 3.<sup>85</sup>



Fig. 3

More remarkably, the altar flames are shown, I believe, even if in miniature form, on drachms of Ohrmazd I Kushanshah which, apart from the altar, follow Sasanian models,<sup>86</sup> and possibly also on the unique scyphate dinar of Hormizd 2.<sup>87</sup> I could not find clear examples of the altar flames on the small copper coins with Pehlevi inscriptions featuring an investiture scene on the reverse, but this may well be due to the small size of the dies, and the lack of space. The Balkh dinars as well as the Marw drachm prove that also under Hormizd I, as long as enough space was available, the altar flames were depicted throughout. The average diameter of the copper coins of Ardashir I is 19 mm, thus considerably larger than Hormizd's Pehlevi issues (15 mm).

When looking carefully at Ardashir I's coins, concentrating on the altar, one certainly sees that, while the altar flames are missing throughout, to the left of the altar a wavy line is shown. This certainly is supposed to represent smoke rising from the altar.<sup>88</sup> No parallels on Kushan coins can be found (the ribbons of the trident pointing to the left are a completely different thing), while exactly the same depiction becomes canonical with the beginning of the main group of Kushano-Sasanian coins, i.e. from the dinars of Peroz 2<sup>89</sup> onwards. While the altar flames are always shown on the copper coins of Peroz 2 and 3,<sup>90</sup> the smoke is entirely missing, most probably because the depiction of the trident and its ribbons in the left obverse field left no place for it. Someone inclined against the chronological reconstruction offered here might be tempted to use this observation as an argument that Ardashir I, therefore, has to be dated later than the beginning of the main group of Kushano-Sasanian coinage. Still, it remains unclear whether the smoke element was invented by Ardashir I or Peroz 2; there are no independent arguments for either assumption, so the use of the smoke on the Ardashir I coins in no way proves that they must be later than Peroz 2. At the same time, a lot of arguments – style, typology, the lack of accompanying precious-metal issues, and so on – set Ardashir I and 2 apart from the main group which commences with Peroz 2.<sup>91</sup> This in itself shows such a well-defined and coherent overall picture that it is impossible to squeeze these two early Kushanshahs in somewhere. Finally, and most importantly, the strong links between Ardashir I and 2 on the one hand and Sasanian imperial coinage of the 270s are a clear indication as to when to date these three types,<sup>92</sup> while the links

between the main group and Sasanian issues shows that it was certainly issued at a later date, viz. after AD 300.

Considering that the peculiar use of the altar flames on Kushano-Sasanian coins is alien to Sasanian numismatics, there can be no doubt that it represents a takeover from Kushan models. This is also shown by the fact that the Kushanshah is shown wearing body armour on the issues from Peroz 2 onwards, once again following Late Kushan models which can first be observed under Vasudeva I, while Ardashir I still wears tunica and trousers in the Sasanian fashions. Admittedly, also Hormizd I is shown in Western Iranian garments on the investiture coppers,<sup>93</sup> and the typologically similar silver issues.<sup>94</sup> But these coins basically follow Sasanian models as regards obverse typology, language of legends, and style. Ardashir I, to the contrary, on his Balkh copper coins, employs an obverse type which is without any doubt of Kushan origin, and he inscribes his coins in Bactrian, rather than in Pehlevi. As regards both the dress and, more importantly in my eye, the absence of the altar flames, the Bactrian issues of Ardashir I follow the patterns of Kushan coinage before Vasudeva I. After all, these major innovations which otherwise are found on all typologically corresponding Kushano-Sasanian coins are totally lacking. To my eye, the most obvious explanation is that, when Ardashir I issued his Bactrian copper coins, the reign of Vasudeva I had not yet begun. This corresponds perfectly with the observation that the copper coins of Ardashir 2, who probably precedes Ardashir 1,<sup>95</sup> show a crown on the reverse which was no longer used after the middle of the reign of Huvishka. It would mean that both Huvishka and the beginning of the reign of Vasudeva belong to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, whence it follows that a starting date for the Kanishka Era of 127 would be impossible. Certainly, such a complex question cannot be solved in a short paper like the present one; but still, this observation should not be too easily discarded. Considering also that several studies by advocates of the 127 dating also fail to cover all relevant data, and often leave aside a lot of material and arguments (especially if it contradicts their basic assumptions), I believe it to be legitimate to treat this numismatic observation in the manner I chose here.

Still, a look at the chronological implications from a somewhat broader perspective is useful. We now know for sure that there was an era used in Bactria until the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD and which began in the 220s. The idea of de Blois<sup>96</sup> that this was a Sasanian Imperial Era introduced after the establishment of the Kushano-Sasanian realm can be easily disproved: there never was such a Sasanian Imperial Era in Sasanian Iran, and, therefore, there is no chance that it was used in Bactria.<sup>97</sup> Falk has published his interpretation of an Indian text which places the beginning of a Kushan era in the year 227. His arbitrary approach to the sources by which he arrives at a beginning date of AD 127 need not detain us here; let us see how the date 227 would fit with the numismatic observation I have presented here.

If Year One was 227, then according to the evidence of the (mostly Indian) inscriptions the reign of Huvishka (known dates: 28–60 KE) would fall into the period of AD 255 to 287, that of Vasudeva I (64–98 KE) to 291 to 325. Ardashir 1 and 2 should be dated, according to the Sasanian parallels, to the 270s. Assuming that the Bactrian copper coins were also issued in this period, they would thus clearly predate the accession of Vasudeva I, as I have postulated above.

I should also like to address again the question of the Ardashir 2/Huvishka connection. As becomes clearly visible from Göbl's system reconstruction, there is a clear stylistic and typological break during the reign of Huvishka. The first half of his rule is characterised by gold coins following, as regards their style, those of Kanishka I; Huvishka wears a semicircular crown with additional elements. In the second half of the reign, the portraits look much more like those of the early reign of Vasudeva I;

<sup>82</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 29, no. 509/1–509/10.

<sup>83</sup> Göbl 1993, pl. 1–24.

<sup>84</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 62–71; Göbl 1993, pl. 7–12. This mint attribution which differs from Göbl's will be discussed in Schindel (in preparation 1).

<sup>85</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 117 f.

<sup>86</sup> Göbl 1993, pl. 26, no. 3.

<sup>87</sup> Göbl 1993, pl. 11, no. 746A.

<sup>88</sup> Thus also Cribb 1990, p. 186.

<sup>89</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 62.

<sup>90</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 117 f.

<sup>91</sup> Schindel 2005; Schindel 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 114, no. 1028, 1029, pl. 118, no. 1114.

<sup>93</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 115, no. 1042–1048.

<sup>94</sup> Göbl 1984, pl. 115, no. 1031 (Herat); Göbl 1993, pl. 26, no. 3 (Marw).

<sup>95</sup> Schindel (in preparation 1).

<sup>96</sup> De Blois 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Schindel 2011.

Huvishka now wears a triangular, dotted crown, which is the model for the late Kushan crowns. Both groups are attested by two emissions; in mint A, there are 141 coins of the earlier group opposed to 157 later pieces; in mint B, the relation is 86 : 64, slightly different, but not of a completely changed character. We may therefore assume that the change occurred towards the middle of the reign of Huvishka, i.e. around year 44 KE, i.e. AD 271. As to why Huvishka changed his coin types, we obviously have to guess. It has to be stated, however, that approximately at the same time – in the period 273 to 276 – the Sasanian king, Vahram I, had silver drachms struck at Balkh, the Kushan capital. One possible explanation for the changes in Huvishka's coinage, therefore, is that the Sasanians conducted a successful military campaign, in the course of which they conquered Balkh. After a short period of Sasanian-style silver coinage, Vahram I or II apparently changed his mind, set up a governor with the title king, i.e. the Kushanshah, and started a local copper coinage in the latter's name. Ardashir I, on the evidence of the mint signature before the bust, belongs in the reign of Vahram II, judging from typology in his early reign,<sup>98</sup> thus still the 270s. It might be more than mere coincidence that we have, on the one hand, a Kushano-Sasanian issue dating to the 270s which shows the transfer of power using a crown employed up to the middle reign of Huvishka, and, on the other hand, a clear stylistic and typological discontinuity at about the same time in the Kushan empire. The reason for Huvishka's typological and stylistic change, according to this line of interpretation, would have been the Sasanian expansion into Bactria, and Huvishka's expulsion from this region. One might even go one step farther and wonder – despite all the problems regarding the “Sasanian crown law”<sup>99</sup> – whether the change in crown is comparable to that of Peroz or Khusro II, i.e. that after the loss of his *khwarrah*, Huvishka, upon re-entering the scene, felt obliged to take over a new crown, in a very similar fashion to practice in Sasanian Iran (even if there, the comparable evidence dates to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries). Because of the relative rarity of the issues of Ardashir I and 2, and the clear discontinuity with the main group of Kushano-Sasanian issues, it is obvious that this first period of Kushano-Sasanian coinage did not last long. Already Göbl has interpreted an issue by Huvishka which includes Ahura Mazda and Oaksho (Oxus) as a rather open allusion to a military triumph over the Sasanians.<sup>100</sup> Rather than witnessing a successful defensive action, this might just as well allude to the restoration of Kushan power in Bactria after the temporary Sasanian conquest attested by the drachms of Vahram I.

Assuming that a suggestion such as this one might not meet with unanimous acceptance, I should like to discuss a final point. To the left of the standing figure of Ardashir I's Bactrian coins, one can always see a swastika. This additional mark is first encountered in Kushan coinage in the third (of four) groups of coinage of Vasudeva I according to Göbl.<sup>101</sup> On the Bactrian copper coins of Ardashir I Kushanshah, the evidence of the altar flames (before Vasudeva I) and the swastika (after Vasudeva I) is clearly contradictory, and I see no way how these two conflicting observations can be reconciled. Obviously, I preferred the altar flames to the additional marks as a chronological benchmark. For the sake of completeness, however, let us have a look at the swastika from an AD 127 point of view. Assuming that the swastika dates Ardashir I's coins after the beginning of the reign of Vasudeva I, the *terminus post quem* for their issue is the introduction of this device on the obverses in group 3 of Vasudeva I. Issues of Khodshah, where the swastika has already been used, but on the reverse rather than on the obverse, can be left aside. In any case, this king (whoever he may be) dates from after the accession of Vasudeva I around 64 KE. If we take the evidence of these additional marks seriously, we also have to take into account that no Brahmi letters can be found on the Bactrian coppers of Ardashir I. So by the same logic which might lead us to the

*terminus post quem*, the lack of additional letters offers a *terminus ante quem* equalling their introduction, also in the 3<sup>rd</sup> group of Vasudeva I's coinage.<sup>102</sup> As stated above, the inscriptions of this Kushan king stretch from 64 KE to 98 KE. If we were to accept a starting date of AD 127 for the Kanishka Era, then the reign of Vasudeva I as mirrored by the Indian inscriptions runs from AD 191 to 225. If one takes this at face value, then the four groups of coinage of Vasudeva I have to be divided over this period of c.34 years, which would result in the *terminus ante quem* (introduction of Brahmi letters) for the coins of Ardashir I Kushanshah certainly before the foundation of the Sasanian dynasty in AD 224, which – needless to say – is absolutely impossible. But even if we follow Cribb and assume that some of the dinars attributed by Göbl to Vasudeva I in fact are Kushano-Sasanian imitations<sup>103</sup> – an assumption which rests on no factual basis whatsoever<sup>104</sup> –, things remain problematic.

According to Cribb, only the issues with the swastika are to be labelled Kushano-Sasanian,<sup>105</sup> i.e. the very coins which were the models for this mark on the Bactrian copper coins of Ardashir I. Accepting a date in the 270s for Ardashir I and 2 means that group 3 of the coinage in the name of Vasudeva I must date to approximately the same time. This leaves us with a gap of at least 45 years between the latest known inscription of Vasudeva I (64 KE = AD 225) and the earliest “Kushano-Sasanian” Vasudeva coins. If one discards the idea of such “imitations”, as seems highly advisable to me, things become even trickier since I have no idea how the gap between AD 225 and the 270s should be bridged. These phantom years, I believe, in reality are a result of dating Year One too early. I am well aware that the chronological considerations proposed here might be used by advocates of 127 as an argument that Cribb's dating of Ardashir I and 2 to the period c.230–245 is correct. But once again, despite the fear of repeating myself, I have to stress that, from a numismatic point of view, it is simply impossible for the copper coins of these two Kushanshahs to have been struck during the reign of Ardashir I. Style, typology, the use of a mint signature, the prominent ear ring, the evidence of

<sup>102</sup> Göbl 1993, pl. 34 f.

<sup>103</sup> Cribb 1990, p. 155, 192.

<sup>104</sup> Let us go through Cribb's arguments in detail: I see no reason why the swastika on the obverse or the crescent should be connected with a Sasanian or Kushano-Sasanian minting authority; in my opinion, the semi-nude depiction of Oesho on the reverse would have been anathema to a Sasanian. Other than the *khwarrah*- and the “taurus”-symbol, I can see no reason why the swastika should be connected with Sasanian Iran. As the earlier emergence of the dotted rosette implies, these symbols owe their existence to internal development in this Kushan mint. The continuity demonstrated in Göbl 1993, pl. 34 f. strongly advocates a continuous development, rather than drastic interruption such as a Sasanian takeover. The changes and modifications one expects when a new power takes over are amply demonstrated by the real Kushano-Sasanian issues from Peroz 2 onwards. We can easily learn how a certain degree of “Sasanidisation” sets in as regards details of the royal depiction (ball of hair), reverse image (Sasanian-style tunic), and legends (obverse: addition of the typical Sasanian title element *wuzurg* not found on any Bactrian legend in the Kushan series, reverse: disappearance of the name Oesho). Apart from this, it is highly implausible that a culturally self-conscious empire such as the Sasanians should first have issued pseudo-Kushan coins, many elements of which were completely alien to Western Iranian concepts, and which were removed on the first real Kushano-Sasanian issues. I am in no position to decide whether Brahmi *er* can represent the beginning of the name Ardashir from a philological point of view; but neither does Cribb prove that this is a highly likely suggestion. The numismatic evidence clearly contradicts a dating of these issues in the reign of Ardashir I, and the comparison with other similar marks on late Kushan coins proves, I believe, that this *er* represents a control mark, and not the actual issuer's name. Most remarkable is the fact that on several “imitational” Vasudeva dinars Brahmi letters other than *er* can be found which, thus, certainly do not stand for the name Ardashir, and which, therefore, cast heavy doubts on Cribb's interpretation. It should be added that Cribb, writing after the publication of Göbl 1984, does not comment on the latter's system reconstruction, and thus – from a strictly methodological point of view – fails to explain why the inclusion of these issues into the Kushan main sequence by Göbl is wrong.

<sup>105</sup> Cribb 1990, p. 155.

<sup>98</sup> Alram/Gyselen 2012, p. 50–59.

<sup>99</sup> Schindel 2004, vol. 1, p. 68–70.

<sup>100</sup> Göbl 1984, p. 66, pl. 18 f.

<sup>101</sup> Göbl 1993, pl. 34 f.

local copper issues from Marw of Ardashir I and Shapur I are, I am convinced, cogent arguments against the suggested early dating of Ardashir I and 2.

Another point, often made by Göbl, might be briefly mentioned here: the use of ribbed diadem ribbons by Huvishka.<sup>106</sup> The only parallel on coins for this is the ubiquitous employment of this typically Sasanian device from Ardashir I onwards. So far, none of the advocates of a 2<sup>nd</sup> century date for the Kanishka Era has attempted (let alone managed) to refute this argument; therefore, it has (from a purely methodological point of view) to be regarded as still valid. I recently discovered ribbed diadems also in the Paradan coinage, on issues which, according to the independent chronology of Tandon, postdate Ardashir I, which might strengthen Göbl's original argument.<sup>107</sup> Taking into account that the ribbed ribbons were used only in his mint C/"Ctesiphon", probably from 226/7 onwards,<sup>108</sup> I am reluctant to date the accession of Huvishka earlier than c.230, allowing for some time until the concept of the ribbed diadem ribbons – probably a novel concept within Iranian royalty, the details of which escape us today – made its way into the Kushan Empire. AD 127 would mean that first Huvishka invented this feature on his dinars in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, that it totally disappeared afterwards, and that it was then re-invented some decades later by Ardashir I, and thence suddenly became one of the most characteristic features of Sasanian art. While strictly speaking such a reconstruction is not impossible, it still appears to me much less likely than the more obvious alternative that Huvishka took over the ribbed ribbons from the place where it was exceedingly common, i.e. Sasanian Iran of Ardashir I and his successors. This would mean that 28 KE – the first attested regal year of Huvishka – cannot be earlier than c.230, and that the Kanishka Era cannot, therefore, have begun before c. AD 200. Considering the existence of a highly important Bactrian era commencing in the AD 220s, and also taking into account Falk's reconstruction in its unbiased form,<sup>109</sup> 227 is a very obvious suggestion which, as I have tried to show here, is also perfectly in accord with the early Kushanshahs Ardashir I and Ardashir 2.

I am well aware of the manifold and complex problems regarding Kushan chronology; I am equally well aware of the fact that the suggestion of AD 227 as starting point of the Kanishka Era involves a lot of difficulties. Still, I would like to emphasize that the year 127 cannot yet be considered to be established without doubt – this is wishful thinking. Only more future work done with an open mind, and not just with the fixed desire to prove one's preconceived ideas, will bring us closer to a better understanding of this complex issue.

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<sup>106</sup> Göbl 1984, p. 152, pl. 175; Göbl 1993, p. 26 f.; Göbl 1999, p. 158, pl. 3.

<sup>107</sup> Schindel (in preparation 2).

<sup>108</sup> Alram/Gyselen 2003, p. 142, 158.

<sup>109</sup> Falk 2001; Falk 2004; most recently Falk 2012.

# A NEW EARLY SERIES OF ANCIENT INDIAN PUNCHMARKED COINS FROM THE 'WHORL' JANAPADA

By Terry Hardaker, Oxford<sup>110</sup>

A hoard of silver punchmarked coins of an entirely new type was reportedly discovered in 2013. They contain four marks of unusual complexity even for *janapada* coins. The findspot is not known; a report of their being from Bharatpur on the border of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh is extremely unlikely. Several dealers have been involved; I have seen actual examples of 31 pieces and photos of a further 150 or so. Many have an encrustation of buff coloured deposit (soil?) that masks most of the detail. This article attempts to unravel the complex punchmarks and place this coinage in an historical context.

## Description

The coins offer some interesting features. All are struck on a weight standard of 4.5 g. They use the early *janapada* system of two-plus-two marks (i.e. two punches are used, each punched twice on the coin in cruciform arrangement). But even though the coins are large (up to 30 mm in diameter) the punches are far too big for four to occupy a flan without gross overlap - each punch can be up to 20 mm in diameter. For punches of this size to be separate, a coin flan would need to have a diameter of 40 mm minimum. That is larger than a 'crown- size' coin. Furthermore the design of the punches, invariably geometric, comprises ingenious intricate curved whorl-like motifs. The result is an extremely perplexing jumble of overlapping curved lines that even on the best specimens, in cleaned state, would at first glance appear to be beyond analysis (Fig 1).



Fig 1: One of the better examples of a Whorl coin

However, because the whorls comprise repeating patterns, only a proportion of each symbol needs to be clear on the coin for the full form to be reconstructed. With two examples of each punch per coin, specimens that appear at first glance to be hopelessly confused can with some practice have their types identified. The whorls are symmetrical, so once a symbol has been tentatively identified, its veracity can be tested by placing an image of the likely complete symbol over the coin photo (using Photoshop), and if the shape of the preserved part coincides, that is additional confirmation that the symbol has been correctly identified (Fig 2).

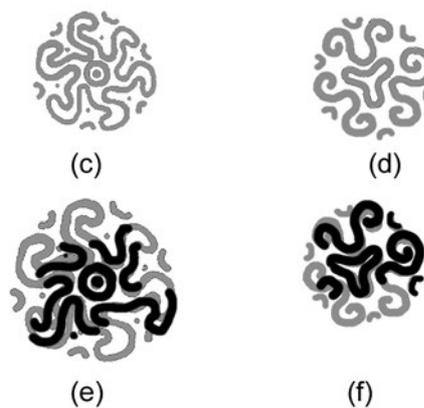
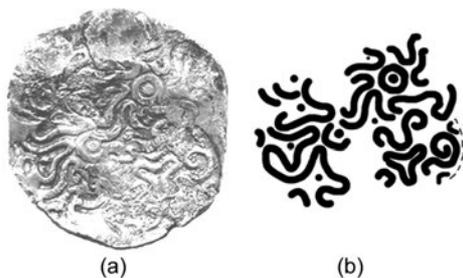


Fig 2: How it's done: (a) sample coin; (b) marks as seen on coin; (c) likely complete primary symbol; (d) likely complete secondary symbol; (e) and (f) best fit for the two most complete marks: this one is Type 1a

A detailed study of the sample of the 31 coins actually examined, together with the best of those seen in photographs, has enabled a tentative classification (Fig 7 at the end of this article), although there is a possibility that more types may emerge. So far eleven varieties are recorded. A few double obverse coins occur in the hoard, but the complete form of all the marks on both sides is not yet clear.

The mint chose a theme of three, five or six repeating shapes placed in circular form. These are most often elaborate, conjoined whorls revolving clockwise. On a minority of types (Types 5 and 6) five curls rotate anti-clockwise round a central dot and circle. In line with some other early geometric coinages there seems to be a principal and a secondary pair of marks, judged on punch size and prominence of position on the flan.

There are significant differences between the two main series (Types 1 and 3). Many Type 1 coins are scyphate, on smaller flans (22-25mm) and often struck from rusty punches (see Types 1c and 1d in the catalogue). Type 3 coins are more often on larger convex flans and struck from fluent, clearly engraved punches. Coins are mostly round but some appear to have been struck on square blanks that have subsequently been beaten out to form bulging squares.

The coins contain bankers marks, mostly on the reverse, where they are deliberately placed towards the edges of the coins, presumably in an attempt to avoid defacing the official marks on the other side (Fig 3), but the flans are so thin they still tend to punch through and flatten the images on the obverse.



Fig 3: Bankers marks and anvil marks on the reverse of a coin (enlarged)

The bankers marks vary in number on any one coin from none to nine and all but one are geometric (Fig 4). Over 60 designs are recorded, but only a few occasionally repeat (mainly the very simple marks 3 and 4). However mark 1 is found very deeply struck on nearly all the coins.

The bankers marks differ on Type 1 and Type 3 coins. The scyphate coins of Type 1 often show the recurrent bankers mark

<sup>110</sup> In parallel with the writing of this article, unknown to me, similar coins were being noted in India. Sharad Sharma and B.P. Verma have published their report on these coins in Numismatic Digest 36-37 (2012-2013) pp1-20.

(1), but it is placed on the obverse, and there are usually no marks on the reverse. Type 3 coins more often have bankers marks only on the reverse. However, nearly all the coins betray peculiarly rough anvil marks on the reverse (Fig 3) and so would appear all to have come from the same mint.

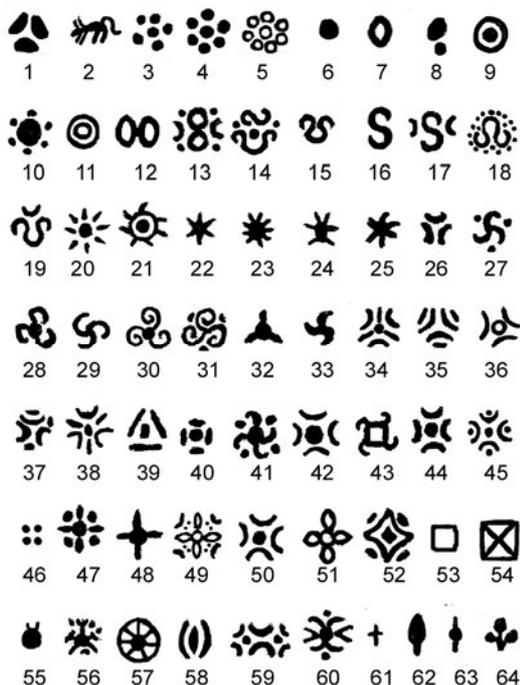


Fig 4: Selected bankers marks on the Whorl coins: No 1 the only frequently recurring mark, 2 the only animate mark, 3-13 dots, circles & ovals, 14-19 S-like shapes, 20-25 radial motifs, 26-39 trilateral, 40-54 quadrilateral, 55-64 odds

**Discussion**

In the absence of a plausible findspot, what can be deduced about the locality and date of these coins from the above evidence? They belong to an early phase of coins that are characterised by heavy weight systems, large flans and exclusively geometric designs. Other series with these characteristics come from an area shown on the map (Fig 5, p33), (Gupta 1959, 1996, 1-24, Hirano 1999, Sharma 2005-6, 7-13, Valdetarro 1977, Mitchiner 1978, Cribb 1985, 278-281, Rajgor 2001). The Whorl coins are unlikely to belong to a *janapada* that was far away from the cluster of findspots on this map. Thus the locality is likely to be within the

middle-lower Gangetic plains. The coins employ official punches that are neither copied from, nor copied by, the issues any other known state. But the adoption of complex geometric designs for their symbology surely means they are contemporary with others following this approach.

Simple geometric bankers marks are shared by many series of punchmarked coins and nothing need be read into this. More significant may be the virtual absence of animate or artefact forms, a characteristic shared with the earliest Kashi-Kosala coins on the 4.5g weight standard (Hardaker 1992). That is suggestive of an earlier date amongst the *janapada* coinages. The custom of placing the bankers marks round the edge has not been noted on any other *janapada* series. It shows there was a consensus amongst the ‘bankers’ of this state which did not become the norm in the wider trading circles of the *janapadas*.

In absolute terms, the date of the Whorl coins cannot be fixed with certainty, but, based on the recent research into the Magadha-Mauryan series using the ‘short chronology’ (Hardaker 2014, 42-49), the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BC would be probable.

The 4.5g weight system (Fig. 6) has quite a low tolerance: control over the coinage was strict. Of the 31 unchipped coins weighed, 27 were between 4.39 and 4.51g. Other early *janapada* states issuing geometric coins (e.g. Mitchiner 2004, 2176-2470) adopted weights ranging from 4.2 to 8.2g, most issues falling within 4.5 to 6.0g. The Whorl coins are, thus, within the general range of early weight systems in the middle-lower Gangetic region.

Speculation is all that can be offered to explain why these states often went to such extreme lengths to design complex geometric shapes. In the early days of coinage, authorities were perhaps nervous about imitation, and rather like paper money today is filled with complex patterns to deter forgery, these early coins were intended to make it impossible for the public to replicate them.

**Conclusions**

This brief enigmatic series adds to the growing number of very early punchmarked coinages recently emerging that represent short-lived issues of small states prior to the imperial expansion of Magadha. Each series usually bears a distinct ‘signature’ on its coinage which suggests it is the ‘badge’ of the state, thus underlining the emergence of independent political units (*janapadas*). The fact that so many small states saw the need to issue coinage may imply budding market economies, rather than budding military strength, during the fifth century BC.

<b>NUMBER OF COINS</b>	11								
	10								
	9								
	8								
	7								
	6								
	5								
	4								
	3								
	2								
	1								
		4.20	4.25	4.30	4.35	4.40	4.45	4.50	4.55
	<b>WEIGHT IN GRAMS</b>								

Fig 6: Weight spread of 31 Whorl coins in undamaged condition

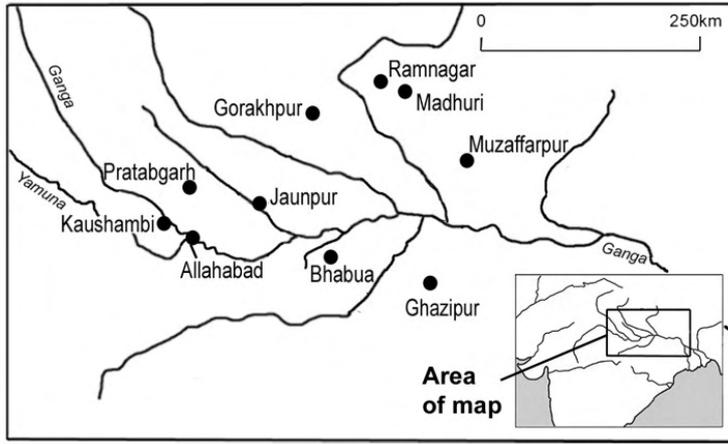
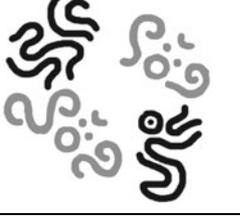
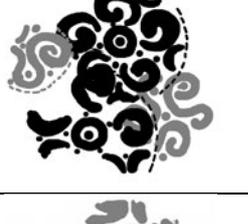


Fig 5 Map showing location of known findspots of early geometric coins

<b>FIG 7 CATALOGUE OF 'WHORL' JANAPADA COINS</b>					
<i>Type</i>	<i>Photo</i>	<i>Marks as on coin</i>	<i>Primary pair</i>	<i>Secondary pair</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1a					11 coins incl 2 as new obv on double obv coins
1b					12 coins noted. 1A and 1b are easily confused
1c					One example only as new obv from rusty dies, needs confirmation
1d					One example only, primary pair central circle very faint
1e					One example only, but type is fairly certain

2a					Seen as old obv on one example only, very difficult coin; secondary pair needs confirmation
2b					One example only; secondary pair needs confirmation
3a					9 coins noted
3b					7 coins noted
4					3 coins noted, one as old obv
5					1 coin noted as old obv

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## CLASSIFICATION OF RATNA DEVA'S SILVER COINS

by Karan Singh<sup>1</sup>

A hitherto unknown silver coin of the seated Lakshmi type was attributed to the 12<sup>th</sup> century Kalachuri king, Ratna Deva, by John Deyell in 1990.<sup>2</sup> He also listed five specimens in his earlier dissertation.<sup>3</sup> Since the publication of his seminal work *Living Without Silver*, however, no further examination of this intriguing series has been attempted.

I have studied 56 specimens of these rare coins to prepare a preliminary classification of the series. These coins are reportedly from a single hoard found in 2009 in Satna district of Madhya Pradesh, India. Some are now in my collection, several have been sold in auction, and the remainder are with two prominent dealers.

These silver coins are small yet attractive, with a stylised female deity seated facing on the obverse and a Devanagari legend *ratna/deva* on the reverse. Both the deity and the legend are crude, with many specimens cruder than others, implying perhaps that the dies became progressively cruder over time.

The coins are die struck and appear to be made of good silver. As was common at the time, the dies were larger than the flan and as a result, much of the legend is off the flan.

It is now clear from the specimens available that there are three main types in this series:

### Type I (11 specimens)<sup>111</sup>

This type is similar to Deyell's 1990 specimen (no. 131). The deity has a solid central pellet representing her abdomen and two short horizontal lines representing her legs. Her head is surrounded by 5 small pellets, two on either side and one on top. Two arms are visible, curving outwards.



Fig. 1 - Type I, Karan Singh Collection

The deity's hands are off the flan on all specimens, but on two specimens three small dots are visible on the left, representing a lotus perhaps.



Fig. 2 - Type I with a 3-dotted lotus to the left of the deity, Karan Singh Collection

### Type II (14 specimens)

The deity has a hollow circle representing her abdomen and a semi-circle representing her legs. Her hands and feet are off the flan on most specimens, but are visible on one specimen I have seen (Fig. 7 below).

This type comes in five varieties:

#### Variety A (1 specimen)

This is similar to Type I, except for the hollow circle. The deity's head, represented by a vertical line, is surrounded by 5 small pellets, two on either side and probably one on top, but this top pellet is off the flan on this specimen.



Fig. 3 - Type II Variety A, Todywalla Auctions no. 65 Part I, Lot 40

#### Variety B (7 specimens)

The number of pellets around the deity's head is reduced to 3, one on either side and the third on top.



Fig. 4 - Type II Variety B, Karan Singh Collection

#### Variety C (1 specimen)

There is no vertical line representing the face in this variety, just 3 pellets around it. The mouth is represented by a short horizontal line.



Fig. 5 - Type II Variety C, Karan Singh Collection

#### Variety D (3 specimens)

The deity's face now consists of 4 small pellets above a smile.



Fig. 6 - Type II Variety D, Karan Singh Collection

#### Variety E (1 specimen)

The deity's face still consists of 4 pellets and a smile, but the legend has an increased curve at the end of *na*. The deity's right hand is visible on this specimen, holding a ring, and her feet are also on the flan.

<sup>111</sup> All illustrations are enlarged.



Fig. 7 - Type II Variety E, Karan Singh Collection

**Variety F** (1 specimen)

This is similar to Variety E, but the hollow circle representing the abdomen is now replaced by a small pellet and a semi-circle.



Fig. 8 - Type II Variety F, Karan Singh Collection

**Type III** (31 specimens)

This is the most common type in this series, comprising over half of the specimens seen. The deity has a hollow circle representing her abdomen; her legs are visible, ending in two parallel vertical feet. Two earrings are visible, flanking the deity's head with a line on top representing her hair. This hairline is off the flan on most specimens, but is visible on six specimens I have seen (Fig. 11 below).

This type comes in two varieties:

**Variety A** (16 specimens)

The deity's arms emerge separately from the hollow circle.



Fig. 9 - Type III Variety A, Zubair Khan Collection

**Variety B** (15 specimens)

The deity's arms are conjoined at the top of the hollow circle.



Fig. 10 - Type III Variety B, Karan Singh Collection



Fig. 11 - Type III Variety B with deity's hairline visible, Karan Singh Collection

The legend found on this type is stylistically different from Types I and II. It still reads *ratna/deva*, but here the letter *na* curves inwards prominently at the end (like Type II Varieties E and F) and the dot that was earlier at the tip of *na* is now distinct and pushed to the centre of the legend.



Fig. 12 - Comparison of legends on Type I (left) and Type III (right)

There is therefore a clear progression from Types I and II to Type III, with the legend on Type II Varieties E and F serving as a transition.

**Metrology**

Most auction catalogues do not provide the weight and size of these coins. So the figures are provided here for the coins that I have the data for.

**Type I**

No.	2				1	2		2		1
Weight	.21	.22	.23	.24	.25	.26	.27	.28	.29	.30

**Type II**

No.		1		1	1	1	2	4	1	
Weight	.21	.22	.23	.24	.25	.26	.27	.28	.29	.30

**Type III**

No.		1	2	2	1		2	9	1	
Weight	.21	.22	.23	.24	.25	.26	.27	.28	.29	.30

The average weight of these coins is 0.261g. Type I coins weigh an average of 0.256g, Type II weigh 0.265g, and Type III 0.264g. The weight is therefore fairly constant across the types. According to Joe Cribb, this denomination is close to a 2 rati standard and is probably a *pana*, representing "the sixteenth of a full karshapana unit of 3.56g."<sup>4</sup>

The average size of the Ratna Deva coins studied by me is 7.7 mm. Type I coins are 7.8 mm on average, Type II are 7.3 mm, and Type III are 8.0 mm. There is, therefore, a marginal increase in size between the first two types and Type III. Deyell 131 appears to be larger (14 mm), so it may have been a different denomination. Since Deyell did not provide the weights of his specimens, one cannot say for sure.

**Identity of the Deity**

In Types I and II, the deity is obviously Lakshmi, as she is a stylised form of the goddess seen on many early medieval Indian coins, such as the gold coins of Gangeya Deva of Tripuri (c. 1015-40) and the silver coins of Ajaya Deva of Ajmer (c. 1110-20).



Fig. 13 - Gangeya Deva AV unit, Karan Singh Collection



Fig. 14 - Ajaya Deva AR coin, Karan Singh Collection

However, the deity in Type III is not so easily identifiable. No breasts are visible, leading some numismatists to doubt that this is a female deity in the first place. A few auction cataloguers have described the deity as Hanuman, while one dealer told me it represents Garuda.

Yet this deity is indeed female. The earrings on either side of the head and the hairline above are similar to those of Lakshmi seen on the coins of Gangeya Deva and Ajaya Deva.

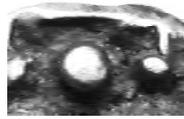


Fig. 15 - Comparison of deity's earrings and hairline seen on the coins of Gangeya Deva (left), Ajaya Deva (centre) and Ratna Deva Type III (right)

The hollow circle of Type III, from which the deity's arms and legs emanate, appears to be a progression from the hollow circle of Type II. The die cutters of Type III coins made this hollow circle more prominent and ignored all other details in their minimalist depiction, except the tell-tale earrings.



Fig. 16 - Comparison of deity details in Type II and Type III

The prominent breasts in Types I and II have also been done away with, though on two Type III Variety A specimens thickened lines on the chest are visible where the breasts used to be depicted, perhaps marking a transitional stage in the evolution of this design.



Fig. 17 - Type III Variety A coin with thickened lines on chest, Kohinoor Auctions, Auction 1, Lot 61

The deity on Type III is, therefore, a stylised seated goddess,<sup>5</sup> almost certainly Lakshmi. Based on the changes seen in the deity and legend, the three types listed here represent a linear development in the series, with Types I and II fairly concurrent and Type III representing the last stage of this coinage.

#### Attribution

These silver coins are clearly different from Ratna Deva II's gold issues that are of the lion-attacking-elephant *gajasardula* type.<sup>6</sup>

Cribb believed such a distinction helped differentiate a "non-gold denomination" from the prevalent gold coinage of a region.<sup>7</sup>

In weight, fabric and design, there is only one comparable series in medieval India, that of Jagapala (c. 1145), a feudatory of the Kalachuri kings.<sup>8</sup> Here, too, there is a stylised goddess on the obverse, with the ruler's name *sijaga/pala* written in Devanagari on the reverse. These coins have larger flans than the Ratna Deva coins (10 mm<sup>9</sup> vs. 7.7 mm), but are marginally lighter with an average weight of 0.223g<sup>10</sup> (compared to Ratna Deva's 0.261g).



Fig. 18 - Jagapala AR coin, Karan Singh Collection

The overall similarity between these two series indicates the two rulers were perhaps contemporaries. Ratna Deva II fits the bill as he ruled Ratanpur c. 1126-1140 and his general, Jagapala, had helped him, his father, Jajalla Deva I (c. 1114-1126), and son, Prithvi Deva II (c. 1140-58), expand the Kalachuri kingdom.<sup>11</sup>

Deyell did not elaborate on his reasons for attributing the *ratna/deva* coins to Ratna Deva II,<sup>12</sup> but unless another ruler named Ratna Deva emerges during this period, his attribution remains correct for Types I and II.

However, I propose that Type III coins are later issues and should be attributed to Ratna Deva III (c. 1181-1182) of the same dynasty. The increased stylisation of Lakshmi and the change in the legend style seen in Type III indicate a progression from Types I and II, while maintaining the continuity of the dynasty's coinage.

#### Conclusion

The silver coins of Ratna Deva II and Ratna Deva III fit a prominent niche in medieval coinage as this was a distinct series with a known ruler's name clearly inscribed. These coins probably served a key monetary purpose for lower value transactions under the Kalachuris, complementing their gold coinage.

Yet the silver coins remain rare, with only 61 specimens known.<sup>13</sup> It is probably due to their small size and people's fascination for gold over the centuries that so few pieces have survived. Their role may be better understood and appreciated once more specimens come to light.

#### References

1. I wish to thank Zubair Khan of Kohinoor Auctions for permitting me to examine and photograph his Ratna Deva coins, John Deyell for his helpful comments, and Pankaj Tandon for helpful comments and for sharing the images of his coins.
2. John Deyell, *Living Without Silver*, 1990, p. 350.
3. John Deyell, PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1982. The five coins listed here include the one later listed as no. 131 in *Living Without Silver*.
4. Joe Cribb, 'Silver Coins of Jagapala, Feudatory of the Kalachuri Kings of Ratanpur, c. AD 1145', *Numismatic Digest*, Vol. 27-28, 2003-2004, p. 78.
5. Devendra Handa and Shailendra Bhandare corroborated this in separate private communications to me.
6. Deyell nos. 129-130, *op. cit.*, p. 350.
7. Cribb, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-82.
9. Since Cribb did not mention the size of these Jagapala coins, I have used the size of my single specimen (Fig. 18).
10. *Op. cit.*, p. 77.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
12. Deyell did not mention the silver coins in his analysis of the Kalachuri coinage (1990, pp. 93-94), a fact pointed out by Cribb (2003-2004, p. 72).
13. This includes the 56 specimens that I have studied and the five specimens listed by Deyell (1982, 1990).

## SHAMS AL-DĪN AḤMAD SHĀH'S COINS

By S. M. Iftekhar Alam

Sultan Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh's tenure as a Sultan of Bengal was less than two years between AH 836 and 837. Different types of coins issued by this ruler have been catalogued by Stan Goron and JP Goenka in *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates*. The purpose of this article is to discuss some features of the coins of this king, beginning with the silver tanka, Coin 1.



Coin 1

### Description

*Obv.* five-line legend within a circle with ornamental border:

السلطان الاعظم  
شمس الدنيا و  
الدين المجاهد احمد  
شاه ابن محمد شاه  
السلطان

*Rev.* Kalimah Tayyibah in a circle. The reverse margin contains the mint as Dākhil Banjaliya and the date as AH 832 for 836.

So, it can be seen from the obverse legends that Aḥmad Shāh took the title of “al-mujāhid”. In fact all other coins using the word *mujāhid* in the title of the sultan can be seen to have “al-mujāhid” instead of “abū'l mujāhid” irrespective of types or die varieties. For example, all of types B390, B391, B392A and B393 of *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates* by Stan Goron and JP Goenka (henceforth referred to as G/G) have the “al-mujāhid” title.



Coin 2 (silver tanka, 10.3 g, 28 mm)

### Description

Obverse legends same as in Coin 1 but seems to be in a plain circle and reverse legends same as in B390 of G/G. However, reverse margin can be read as

هذه السكة في عرصة ستگانو or چتگانو

So, this coin was struck either from Arṣah Satgāon or Arṣah Chatgāon. A shroff mark just after Arṣah has defaced the letter making it difficult to distinguish between Satgāon and Chatgāon. However, this is a new type of coin of Aḥmad Shāh which, again, has the title of “al-mujāhid” instead of the customary “abū'l mujāhid” adopted by other sultans of Bengal.

The third coin to be examined here is Coin B388 of G/G.

*Obv.* five-line legend within a plain circle:

المؤيد بتأييد  
الديان شمس الدنيا  
و الدين المجاهد  
احمد شاه بن محمد  
شاه السلطان

*Rev.* four-line legend within a circle:

ناصر امير المؤمنين  
غوث الاسلام  
و المسلمين خلد  
ملكه

The reverse margin contains the mint and date.

It is important to note that, on the obverse, the first word in the second line is *الديان*

The word *الديان* (al-Daiyyān) means “the Supreme Judge” which

refers to God. So, the title *المؤيد بتأييد الديان* stands for “one

who is aided by the assistance of the Supreme Judge”. If we

examine the other types of G/G that begin with *al-mu'ayyad* legend, we will see that all these coins (B389, B392, B392A and B394 of G/G) have the word “al-Daiyyān” instead of “al-Raḥmān”.

No other sultan of the Bengal sultanate adopted this title of *المؤيد بتأييد الديان* in coins. But Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh (AH 837-

864), Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh (AH 879-885), Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh (AH 893-896) and 'Alā al-Dīn Ḥusain Shāh (AH 899-925) of Bengal adopted this title in their inscriptions discovered so far. A

list of these inscriptions is given below:

- A. Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh, inscription from Bara (Balanagar), Birbhum, W. Bengal, India; dated AH 854<sup>1</sup>.
- B. Shams al-Dīn Yūsuf Shāh, inscription from Pandua, Hugli, W. Bengal, India; dated AH 882<sup>2</sup>.
- C. Saif al-Dīn Fīrūz Shāh, inscription from Goamalti, Gaud, Malda, W. Bengal, India<sup>3</sup>.
- D. 'Alā al-Dīn Ḥusain Shāh :
  - a) Inscription from Phuti Mosque, Old Malda; dated AH 900<sup>4</sup>.
  - b) Inscription from Chhota Sona Masjid, Firuzpur, Gaud, Nawabganj<sup>5</sup>.
  - c) Inscription from Chittagong City; dated AH 921<sup>6</sup>.

### References:

1. Professor Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992, p-124.
2. Shamsud-Din Ahmed, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, vol IV, Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi, 1960, p-99.
3. Professor Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992, p-226.
4. Professor Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992, p-237.
5. Professor Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992, p-312.
6. Professor Abdul Karim, *Corpus of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bengal*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1992, p-321.

## SIRĀJ AL-DĪN ‘SIKANDER’ (?) SHĀH – A NEW RULER OF THE BENGAL SULTANATE

By Noman Nasir & Md. Shariful Islam

The history of the Bengal sultanate period appears to be most eventful among all the sultanates of India. Due to lack of adequate historical resources, numismatic and epigraphic evidence plays a vital role in constructing the history of the period. A coin has recently turned up which shows the existence of a previously unknown sultan who must have been proclaimed himself as an independent ruler somewhere and sometime in Bengal for a brief period of time. Here are the details of the newly discovered coin:



Obv: *al-musta’in billah al-musta’an sirāj al-dunyā wa’l dīn abū’l muẓaffar sikandar(?) shāh al-sultān.*

Rev: *al-musta’sim billah nāṣir amīr al-mū’minīn khallada mulkahu*

Weight: 10.43 g

The important features of the coins are discussed below.

The *laqab* of the ruler is very clear and undoubtedly reads ‘*Sirāj al-Dīn*’ which proves the existence of a ruler hitherto unknown from any historical, numismatic or epigraphic sources. But the *ism* cannot be seen clearly as a part of it was not struck up. Only the initial letter ‘س’ (*sīn*) is clearly visible and seems to be followed by ‘ک’ (*kaf*), ‘د’ (*dal*) and ‘ر’ (*re*) which may represent ‘سکندر’ (Sikander). Hence, we have tentatively read the name as ‘*Sirāj al-Dīn Sikandar Shāh*’ until we find a clearer specimen.

As mentioned above, the coin was struck without a date or mint name but, considering its weight, stylistic features and legends, it undoubtedly fits with the eastern Bengal (Mu’azzamabad) coins of the ninth century AH. The obverse contains a legend ‘*al-musta’in billah al-musta’an*’ (*Seeker of help, shelter from Allah*) which was only used by two other enigmatic rulers of Bengal – Quṭb al-Dīn A’zam Shāh and Ghiyāth al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh. Both of these rulers are known only from their coins, there being no mention of them in epigraphic or contemporary sources. A’zam Shāh is said to have ruled in Bengal in c. AH 837<sup>112</sup>, succeeding Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh, son of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh. The assumption regarding A’zam Shāh’s ruling period was made on the basis of stylistic similarities between certain coins of Aḥmad Shah and A’zam Shah. There is currently no reported hoard containing coins of Aḥmad Shah and A’zam Shah together. Below are illustrations of the eastern mint coins of these two rulers by way of comparison. Another ruler, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Nuṣrat Shāh, struck coins from Mu’azzamabad mint in AH 837<sup>113</sup>.



*Tanka of Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh*



*Tanka of Quṭb al-Dīn A’zam Shāh*

The newly discovered coin of Siraj contains the phrase ‘*nāṣir amīr al-mū’minīn khallada mulkahu*’ (Helper of the leader of the believers, may Allah perpetuate his kingdom) which is also similar to the Chatgaon-type coins of Quṭb al-Dīn A’zam Shāh<sup>114</sup>. Though A’zam Shāh used two more titles, viz. ‘*yamīn khalīfat allah*’ (right hand of the Caliph of Allah) and ‘*ghawth al-islām wa’l muslimīn*’ (protector of Islam & Muslims) on his other coins as can be seen in the illustrations above. These three titles on the coins of Quṭb al-Dīn A’zam Shah and his successors also feature on coins of the previous rulers, Shihāb al-Dīn Bāyazīd, ‘Alā al-Dīn Fīrūz bin Bāyazīd, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad & Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad, sometimes accompanied by other titles. The reigns of all these rulers are contained within the period AH 790 to 837. Hence, this suggests the “new” ruler should also be assigned to some time within this period.

The reverse of the coin mentions the name of al-Musta’sim Billah which one would normally expect to be the name of the concurrent or, in some cases, the recent caliph of the Islamic world. There were two caliphs named al-Musta’sim Billah: the last Caliph of Baghdad who ruled from AH 639 to 655 (AD 1242 to 1258) and the eighth Caliph of Cairo who ruled from AH 786 to 789 (AD 1386 to 1389) in his second reign. During the early sultanate period in Bengal, rulers often paid allegiance to the caliphate by citing the name of the then, or recent, caliph on their coins. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Iwaḍ Khiljī cited the caliph al-Nāṣir on some of his coins<sup>115</sup>. Coins struck from the Bengal area between AH 624 and 645 in the names of the Delhi sultans Shams al-Dīn Īltutmish, Jalāl al-Dīn Raḍīyya, Rukn al-Dīn Fīrūz, Mu’izz al-Dīn Bahrām, ‘Alā al-Dīn Mas’ūd and early coins of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh bear, initially, the name of the caliph al-Zāhir, and then al-Mustaṣir Billah. The earliest dated coin found in the name of al-Musta’sim was struck in AH 649<sup>116</sup> in the name of Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh and this citation continued for a long time up to the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Shāh in AH 725<sup>117</sup>. Subsequent rulers of Bengal ceased mentioning the name of any particular caliph, preferring to use such phrases as *yamīn khalīfat* and *nāṣir amīr al-mū’minīn* (The Right Hand of the Khilafat and Helper of the Leader of the Believers) to express their homage to the caliphate as an institution. Therefore, the latest known Bengal sultanate coin to

<sup>114</sup> S.Goron & J.P.Goenka, *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates*, Page 199, Coin No: B399

<sup>115</sup> *ibid*, Page 150

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, Page no 156, Coin No B70.

<sup>117</sup> In a Private Collection

<sup>112</sup> S.Goron & J.P.Goenka, *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates*, Page 198

<sup>113</sup> Iftekhar Alam, ‘Two Little-known Sultans of Eastern Bengal’, *JONS* 186, P. 28-29, 2006.

mention the name of the Caliph of Baghdad, al-Mustaʿsim seems to have been struck in AH 725<sup>118</sup>, a long time before the issue of the newly discovered tanka. Hence, it is far more likely that the caliph al-Mustaʿsim cited on the coin of Sirāj al-Dīn refers to the later Caliph of Cairo with that name, despite the fact that he had probably been dead for some years. It is likely that *Siraj* was trying to strengthen his position and justify his rule by quoting the name of what he thought was the current caliph.

From all this it is clear that we are dealing with a rather enigmatic ruler named *Siraj al-Din* who may have been a governor or usurper in eastern Bengal and who tried to assert his independence during the period of turmoil in the first half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century AH (late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> century AD). We must hope for one or more specimens with more of the legends visible before we can say any more on the subject.

*Note:* In *Riaz-u-S-Salatin* by Ghulam Husain Salim, we find that the name of an appointed judge (qazi) in the court of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Aʿzam Shāh (AH 793-812) was Sirāj al-Dīn.<sup>119</sup> It may have happened that, when Bāyazīd Shāh became sultan in AH 814 with the help of Raja Ganesha, who had dethroned the previous sultan, Saif al-Dīn Ḥamzah Shāh bin Aʿzam Shāh, the loyal judge of Aʿzam Shāh fled to the east, rebelled against Bāyazīd/Raja Ganesha and tried to assert his independence using his name of Sirāj al-Dīn, but was subsequently captured & killed.

We are grateful to the Editor for his comments and assistance in editing this paper.

## THE HEAVY RUPEES OF SHĀH ʿĀLAM I BAHĀDUR

By Alan S. DeShazo

The eminent scholar, S. H. Hodivala, seems to be the first to have noticed the existence and significance of an attempted coinage reform initiated by Shāh ʿĀlam Bahādur (ah 1119-1124). He published details of this discovery in *Numismatic Supplement XXVIII*<sup>1</sup> where Hodivala quotes Alī Muhammad Khān, the author of the *Mirāt-i-ahmadī*<sup>2</sup>, who had transcribed the Persian from either the original or a copy of an Imperial Farmān in the archives of the Sūba of Ahmadābād. Hodivala's translation of that follows:

“And in the year 1122, a Hasb-ul-Hukm was graciously ordered to be issued to the Diwān of the Subah in these words: ‘The mandate which is universally obeyed and [dazzling] like the rays of the sun is now issued that the *ashrafi* and the rupee bearing the auspicious coin-legend should be made equal in weight to the tolā.’ For some time this was observed, with respect to the weight of the coins, but it was soon afterwards suspended, and orders were issued for following the practice of former times”.

Rupees were previously struck at the weight of 11! mashas. The tolā weighed 12 mashas, which represented an increase of 4%. According to the surviving evidence, seemingly only a few of the mints complied with the royal order. Although this represented a very modest change it was even less successful than the larger increases attempted by his great-grandfather, Jahāngīr. The actual weights recorded from the known mints clustered either around a mean of about 11.9 g or a mean of about 12.0 g. This may not be significant, but it suggests to me that there was a slight difference in the local weights of the masha and so the tolā. If one compares the weight of any heavy rupee to its immediately preceding pre-reform issue at the same mint, the difference is very close to

being 4%. However, there are no obvious marks on the coins to indicate that there is a difference in weight.

Mints that are known to have struck these coins are:

*Around 12.0 g, an increase from about 11.5 g*  
 ʿAzīmābād 1122 year 4-1124 year 6 (inclusive)  
 Akbarnagar 1123 year 5, year 6  
 Allahābād year 6  
 Jahāngīrnagar year 5  
 Kābul 1123 year 5  
 Kārīmābād 1123 year 5  
 Sūrāt year 5

*Around 11.9 g, an increase from about 11.4 g*  
 Akbarābād years 4, 6  
 Kashmīr 1122 years 4-5  
 Lāhore 1123 year 5  
 Shāhjahānābād 1122 year 5, 1123 year 5, year 6  
 Tatta 1122, year 5

A few other heavy rupees, issued by contenders for the succession after Shah ʿĀlam's death are also known:

*ʿAzīm ush-Shān*  
 Jahāngīrnagar 1124 year ahd 11.99 g  
 Katak 1124 ahd 12.12 g

*Jahāndār Shāh:*  
 Katak 1124 year ahd 12.2 g



Heavy rupee of ʿAzīmābād, AH 1122 year 4, 12.03 g  
 Zeno 103522



Heavy rupee of ʿAzīmābād, ah 1123 year 5, 12.05 g  
 Zeno 112477



Heavy rupee of Kashmīr, ah 1122 year 5, 11.86 g  
 CNG 279, Lot: 783

<sup>118</sup> A rare type coin of ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAlī Shāh (AH 740-746) also bears the name of al-Mustaʿsim but unfortunately no clear date is known (G&G, B140).

<sup>119</sup> Ghulam Husain Salim, *Riaz-u-S-Salatin*, (translated by Maulavi Abdus Salam M.A., 1902, Page: 110)

The heavy coins continued to be struck for a short while in the more eastern mints due mostly to their being under the control of his grandson Farrukhsiyar and ‘Azīm-ush-Shān, his son, who was at court and acted through a deputy. The issue in the name of Jahāndār, another son, may indicate a brief acceptance of his usurpation by the local officials but not necessarily by Farrukhsiyar himself who was already advancing his own claims.

Hodivala also discusses these coins briefly in his chapter XVIII, “The Weight of the Mughal Tola” in his *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics*.<sup>3</sup>

It may be that other mints struck these coins for Shah ‘Ālam I, but their issues either did not survive or have not yet been identified. The published catalogues of the collections in Lāhore, Calcutta and Lucknow show few rupees struck after the year combination A.H. 1122 and regnal year 4. It is possible that the authorities at those mints either chose not to strike coins at the higher weight or owners of bullion were not inclined to bring it in because they would receive fewer rupees than before. The catalogues of the major collections of Mughal coins list very few of these. Presently, their scarcity is under-appreciated.

Robert Senior reported two unusually heavy rupees. One was of Shāh ‘Ālam of ‘Azīmābād ah 1123 year 5 weighing 13.89 g and the other was of Shāh Jahān III of ‘Azīmābād, ah 1174 at 13.55 g.<sup>4</sup> I do not know of any official orders for coins of these weights. They would weigh the same as the Jahāngīrī heavy rupee standard of more than a century previous to them but do not seem to be recorded elsewhere as far as I can determine.

*References*

- 1 Hodivala, S.H., *Numismatic Supplement XXVIII*, Article 176, 1917, “Some Heavy Rupees of Bahādur Shāh Shāh ‘Ālam I”
- 2 *Mirāt-i-ahmadī*, Bombay Lithograph, 1307 A.H. Part I, p.408, Ll. 10-13
- 3 Hodivala, S.H. *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics*, The Numismatic Society of India, The Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay 1, 1976, p.228
- 4 Senior, Robert “Some Unusual Mughal Coins”, *Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter* 141, Summer 1994, pp 16-17

## A MUGHAL-STYLE COPPER DAM FROM THE BOMBAY MINT

By Dr Paul Stevens

### Introduction

In a recent sale<sup>1</sup> there featured a copper dam in the name of Muhammad Shah. The coin clearly shows the mint name of Bombay and has the correct weight for a dam. However, all previously known copper coins issued from the Bombay mint have a European design and this dam differs from them in being of Mughal design (i.e.) with Persian writing on both sides. This paper explores how and why such a coin might have been issued.

### The Coin



Photo from Stephen Album Rare Coins. Wt = 20.96g (not actual size)

As can be seen, the coin shows the standard *muḥammad shāh bādshāh...* legend on the obverse and the standard reverse legend: *zarb munbai sanah [RY] julūs maimanat mānūs*. Neither the Hijri date nor the regnal year is visible. However, the *seen of julūs* on the reverse contains a six-dotted symbol. The rupees of Muhammad Shah have a variety of different symbols in this position and, whilst these symbols do not provide a means for accurately dating the coin they do follow a chronological sequence. The cataloguer of the coin was aware of this and implied that the symbol might indicate an issue in regnal year 7 or 8 of Muhammad Shah.

### Symbols found on the rupees of Bombay from 1717 to 1740

Emperor	AH/ RY	AD	Symbol(s)
Farrukh Siyar	xxxx/ 6	1717/ 18	
	xxxx/ 7	1718/ 19	
Shah Jahan II	1131/ Ahd	1719	
Muhammad Shah	1132/ 2	1720/ 21	
	xxxx/ 3	1721/ 22	
	4	1722/ 23	
	xxxx/ 5	1723/ 24	
	xxxx/ 6	1724/ 25	
	xxxx/ 7	1725/ 26	
	xxxx/ 8	1726/ 27	”
	xxxx/ 9	1727/ 28	”
	xxxx/ 10		”
	xxxx/ 11	1729/ 30	

	xxxx/ 12	1730/ 31	
	xxxx/ 13	1731/ 32	”
	xxxx/ 14	1732/ 33	”
	xxxx/ 15	1733/ 34	”
	xxxx/ 16	1734/ 35	
	xxxx/ 17	1735/ 36	”
	xxxx/ 18	1736/ 37	”
	xxxx/ 19	1737/ 38	”
	xxxx/ 21	1739/ 40	”

As can be seen, the six-dot symbol occurs on rupees of regnal years 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11<sup>2</sup>. If the symbol seen on the dam falls into the same dating sequence, then the coin must have been struck between about 1725 and 1729.

#### Archival Sources



Double pice 1728 (not actual size)

A search of the records of the East India Company, held in the British Library in London has revealed only one year in which copper coins were struck during the 1725-29 period and that is in 1728 when a large shipment of copper coins was received from Persia. However, copper coins of European style are known dated 1728 and appear to be the result of this coinage. It is possible, but extremely unlikely, that copper coins were struck in the Mughal style at the same time but this would have been quite out of character since copper coins both before and afterwards had been, and continued to be, struck with European designs.

However, in 1738 a private merchant had obviously bought some copper from the Company and planned to have it coined at the mint. He first had a small quantity coined in order to ascertain the charges. In the end, the Bombay Council decided against allowing him to have the remainder coined at Bombay as it might undermine the activities of the Surat mint<sup>3</sup>:

*The purchaser of the Honble Company's copper having been allowed to coin ten maunds in order to ascertain the mint charges & to know how much more he could afford to give the Honble Company for permission to coin a quantity. The President acquaints the Board that the mint undertakers had delivered him on account coinage of ten maunds whereby the charges appear to be rupees three per maund as follows:*

	Rupees
Waste in melting or running the copper into small bars, two seers per maund	1,0,00
Earthen fire places and pots	0,0,50
Workmanship per maund	1,0,50
Cutting stamps and stamping	0,0,60
Charcoal, three baskets used to one maund of copper, at five baskets per rupee	0,2,40
Charges per maund	3,0,00

*The purchaser being then called in and asked what he is willing to give (besides paying the charge for the liberty of coinage he makes an offer of one rupee per Surat maund, which, the Board refusing, he at length offers one rupee and half per Surat maund, declaring it to be the most he can give.*

*The Board debating thereupon it is observed that our giving permission for coining said copper here would occasion some trouble and dispute with the Surat Governor as it would be depriving him of so much of his revenue, besides that we have not people enough here nor would others care to come without being certain of a constant employ. We therefore don't think proper to grant the permission requested but agreed that we represent the case to the Honble Company that if they think it worthwhile to hazard a dispute with the Surat Governor (which we believe would only be for one year) for the profit they may reap by coining the copper here they may give us our orders accordingly; and we must observe we are informed a considerable quantity even seven or eight thousand maunds per annum may be sold and coined here if they are pleased to give permission...*

This reference might well provide the explanation for the existence of the copper dam under discussion. Only a small number of coins appears to have been struck, thus explaining the rarity. Moreover, the fact that the Bombay Council was concerned that the Nawab of Surat might be upset by the issue of the coins, might suggest that they were of the Mughal design. Copper dams in the Mughal style were issued from the Surat mint at this time so the issuing of a similar style coin from Bombay might well have caused friction.

Of course, none of this is conclusive, but in the absence of further evidence, this seems the most likely explanation for the existence of this rare coin.

#### References & Acknowledgements

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Album Rare Coins, Auction 18 (2014), lot 1301. Thanks to Shailen Bhandare for drawing my attention to the coin.

<sup>2</sup> My thanks to Bob Johnston for helping get these in the correct order and spotting the difference between the way that RY 10 and RY 15 are written.

<sup>3</sup> Bombay Public Consultations, IOR P/341/9, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1738.

# HOW TO READ THE LEGENDS ON COINS OF THE WESTERN KSHATRAPAS

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

By Pankaj Tandon<sup>120</sup>

The coins of the Western Kshatrapas are one of the most collectible series of ancient Indian coins. The coins are in a precious metal (silver) but are nevertheless quite inexpensive, the designs are attractive, and the series is quite long, stretching for well over 300 years. New types, including new kings and new dates for known kings, are still being discovered, making the process exciting for the treasure-hunter in all of us. In many ways, therefore, it is an ideal series for collectors. But there is a barrier to collecting these coins: since the portraits on the coins are not realistic, the issues of the different kings must be distinguished from one another by the reading of the coin legends, which are inscribed in the Brahmi script. If a collector cannot read Brahmi letters, he or she might think that collecting these coins is out of reach. The purpose of this article is to show how someone can easily learn to read the legends on these coins, thereby making it possible to collect them and even to make new discoveries.



Figure 1: Map showing approximate location of Western Kshatrapa territory  
(map adapted from Wikipedia)

The Western Kshatrapas were Scythian (Saka) people who ruled a substantial kingdom that encompassed much of modern-day Gujarat and Maharashtra and some adjacent areas (see map in Figure 1). Although we might think of them as a “foreign” tribe, they were in fact assimilated into the Indian population and so are, in a sense, the ancestors of many Indians who live today in these states. Indeed, the portraits on the Western Kshatrapa coins often resemble faces we see today in Maharashtra. So it would be more accurate to say that the Western Kshatrapas were outsiders when they came into India in the first century, but then became part of the Indian population. The period of their rule was c. 35-415, but in this article I will leave out the early period, when the kings belonged to the Kshaharata dynasty. The coins of the Kshaharatas can be distinguished because they have a different reverse design. This article will instead focus on the coins of the Kardamaka dynasty and later followers, all of which had the same design. The Kardamaka dynasty was founded by the king Chastana, who also started the dating system known as the Śaka era in the year 78. Later rulers maintained the coin design of the Kardamakas and are included here.

The coins of the Kardamakas all have the king’s portrait on the front and a reverse design featuring a *chaitya* (a three-arched hill or stupa topped by a crescent moon) in the centre, with a crescent moon above it to one side and a sun (consisting of a number of dots arranged in a circular pattern) above it on the other side, a wavy line below thought to represent a river, and a circular legend in Brahmi letters all around. The typical reverse can be seen on the accompanying photograph of the silver coin of Vijayasena in Figure 2. Since the portraits of the kings are not individualised, it is impossible to definitively attribute the coins on the basis of the portraits. Thus the legends must be read. How to read these is explained next.

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<sup>120</sup> Boston University. In learning to read the legends on Western Kshatrapa coins, I was greatly aided by two excellent catalogues of these coins: Amiteshwar Jha and Dilip Rajgor: *Studies in the Coinage of the Western Kshatrapas*, Nashik: Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, 1992, and R. C. Senior: *Indo-Scythian Coins and History*, Volume II, London and Lancaster, PA: Classical Numismatic Group, 2001.





Rudrasena II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	M	Viradaman	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Visvasimha	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	K	Rudrasena II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Bhartrdaman	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	K,M	Rudrasena II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Visvasena	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	K	Rudrasena II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Rudrasimha II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	K	Jivadaman	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Yasodaman II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	K	Rudrasimha II	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Rudrasena III	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	M	Swami Rudradaman	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Swami Simhasena	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	M	Swami Rudrasena	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Rudrasena IV	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	M	Swami Simhasena	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢
Rudrasimha III	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢	M	Swami Satyasimha	𑀲𑀸𑀓𑀾𑀢

**Dates**

There is one more item that must be dealt with: the reading of dates. Coins from Rudrasimha I onwards were dated in Brahmi numerals behind the head of the king on the obverse. For the collector, identifying the dates is an exciting task as it adds to the complexity of the series. The dates are also important for the historian attempting to establish a firm chronology for the rulers. And since the dates are not always present on the flan, finding a dated coin adds to the collector's pleasure.

The dates are in the Śaka era, probably dating to the first year of Chastana's rule as year 1, corresponding to year 78 of the common calendar. The earliest dated coins known are dated 100, so there are normally three numerals in a date: a digit for the hundreds, a digit for the tens, and a digit for the units. In the case of a number like 105, there would be no tens digit and so there would only be two numerals, the one for 100 and the one for 5. The numerals used on Kshatrapa coins are given in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Brahmi Numerals used to date Kshatrapa coins**

𑀲	𑀸	𑀓						
100	200	300						
𑀲	𑀸	𑀓	𑀾	𑀢	𑀸	𑀓	𑀾	𑀢
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
𑀸	𑀓	𑀾	𑀢	𑀸	𑀓	𑀾	𑀢	𑀸
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

We can illustrate the use of the numerals by reading the date on the Vijayasena coin from Figure 2. A detail of the date part, seen at the back of the king's head, is shown in Figure 3. The first numeral is clearly the symbol for 100. The second numeral might be read as the number 50, but no coins are known for Vijayasena that have dates in the 150's, so we know that the digit must stand for 60, with the top part of the digit off the flan of the coin. The illustration draws in the extra part that is missing. Finally, the third digit could be a 2 or a 3. The third stroke could be a completion for the numeral 3, or it could be the bottom of the next "blundered" letter. Surrounding the date, there is normally a meaningless series of "Greek" letters carried over from the Indo-Greek coins on which the Kshatrapa coins are based. So that third stroke could belong to one of those letters. In any case, this coin was made in Saka year 162 or 163, equivalent to years 240-241 of the common calendar. Sometimes we just cannot be absolutely sure what the date says, especially when parts of the numerals are off the flan.



Figure 3: Date on Vijayasena coin

Nevertheless, with these numerals and the ability to read legends, a collector can safely indulge in the pleasure of collecting Kshatrpa coins and share in the excitement of attributing coins themselves and perhaps making some new discoveries!

### GEORGIAN-HULAGID CHRISTIAN COINAGE: A NEW DENOMINATION? (1/2 DIRHAM OR 1/3 DIRHAM IN THE NAME OF ABAGHA)

By Irakli Paghava and Igor Myasnikov

The Georgian-Hulagid Christian coinage (minted at Tiflis, the capital of Georgia) constitutes a more or less uniform series of silver coins with the name of the Ilkhan overlord on the obverse and the Christian creed on the reverse (mostly along with the effigy of a cross, rarely with the name of the Georgian king).<sup>121</sup>

It has been conjectured, that, irrespective of the legends they bear, all the Georgian-Hulagid Christian coins were the same denomination: they were all *dirhams*.<sup>122</sup> A recent discovery, however, challenges the validity of this statement. It is a silver coin of Georgian-Hulagid Christian type, struck in the name of Abagha, and found (by metal detecting?) somewhere in the territory of eastern Georgia. Details are as follows:

Weight 0.69 g, dimensions c. 15-16 mm, relatively thin flan of c. 0.5 mm (the flan thickness of the dirhams is normally c. 0.8-0.9 mm), die axis 9 o'clock. The marginal legends are worn. Fig. 1. (Cf. dirham of Abagha in Fig. 2).

The graphemes on both sides are of a regular size, typical for the Georgian-Hulagid Christian dirhams.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Rev.: Fragments of the top 4 lines of the standard 5-line legend in Mongol –

qaghanu  
nereber  
abagha yin  
deletkeguluk  
sen

(In the Khaqan's name struck by Abagha)

Rev.: Fragments of the Christian formula in Arabic and a cross:

بسم الاب  
والابن وروح  
القدس اله  
واحد

(In the name of the father and the son and the holy spirit, one God †)

The weight of the Georgian-Hulagid Christian dirhams fluctuated within the 2.20-2.50 g range. [Пахомов Евгений. *Монеты Грузии*. [The Coins of Georgia]. Тбилиси: Мецниереба, 1970. P. 160-173; P. 168.

According to I. Jalaghania, the average weight of the Georgian-Hulagid Christian dirhams in the name of Abagha was equal to 2.17 g (n=56). [Джалагания И. *Из истории монетного дела в Грузии XIII века* - From the Monetary History of 13<sup>th</sup> century Georgia]. Тбилиси: Мецниереба, 1958. P. 59 However, this coin is only 0.69 g. There are two possibilities:

- this is a fragment of what was originally a regular dirham, with the margins more or less uniformly clipped; or
- it is a coin produced by applying regular dirham dies upon a specially produced flan of minor dimensions/thickness/weight, and with the margins worn while in circulation?

In our opinion, the latter option is more probable. We know that, in circulation, the margins of the coins tended to become more worn than the central area. The presence of these worn margins indicates, in our opinion, that this coin circulated for quite a while having more or less the same surface area as presently. A dirham clipped down to the weight of this coin would have lost much more of the legends. Bearing in mind as well the thinner than usual flan, all this implies that the coin was struck as a

<sup>121</sup> Пахомов Евгений. *Монеты Грузии*. [The Coins of Georgia]. Тбилиси: Мецниереба, 1970. P. 160-173; Lang David. *Studies in the Numismatic History of Georgia in Transcaucasia*. New York, 1955. P. 44-51; Джалагания И. *Из истории монетного дела в Грузии XIII века*. [From the Monetary History of the 13<sup>th</sup> C. Georgia]. Тбилиси: Мецниереба, 1958. P. 53-75; Paghava Irakli, Gvindjilia Zurabi, Kudin Sergey. "Star in Lieu of Cross: Notes on the Early Georgian-Khulagid Christian Dirhams". *Journal of Oriental Numismatic Society* 196 (2008): 7-15.

<sup>122</sup> Пахомов Евгений. *Монеты Грузии*. [The Coins of Georgia]. Тбилиси: Мецниереба, 1970. P. 168.

fraction of a dirham. Precisely which fraction is uncertain. The weight of 0.69 g could be either a 1/3 dirham or possibly a worn half dirham of the 2.20 standard (*vide supra*). More specimens are required to draw more precise conclusions.

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**CONTENTS OF JOURNAL 220**

	Page
ONS news and meetings: AGM, Oxford, Mumbai, Bremen; new members	1
New and recent publications	3
Book review: <i>Kalighat Hoard: The First Gupta Coin Hoard from India</i> (SB Majumdar), by R. Bracey	4
Book review: <i>Sekkeh Shenasi Akharin Shahan-e Sasani (Numismatic of the Latest Sasanian Kings)</i> (A. Amini) by H M Malek	5
Book review: <i>Handbook of Coins of Baktria and Ancient India (O. Hoover)</i> by R. Bracey	6
Book review: <i>The Coins of India. The Mughal Emperors, Part VII. The Silver Coins in the Name of Shah Alam I Bahadur Including the Pre-Accession and Rebellion Coinage of Azam Shah, Kam Bakhsh and Muazzam Shah</i> (A. Needham & M Tariq) by P. Stevens	6
The chronological framework of the Aksumite coinage in its first hundred years (after 295 to c. AD 400): II The metrological and typological evolution under King Aphilas, by W. Hahn	8
A dangerous forgery of the Qumm dinar of AH 308 by R. Dauwe	10
The mint of Fuman (Iran): new data, by R. Dauwe	11
The coinage of the Saffarids of Sijistan and related dynasties 247h-332h: part 2, by S. Lloyd	12
Two Rustamid fulus struck in Tiharat and Tilimsin, by L. Liétard	20
The identity of Eucratides and the fall of Ai Khanoum, by J. Jakobsson	23
Two Indo-Scythian coins, by R. Senior	26
Ardashir I Kushanshah and Vasudeva the Kushan: numismatic evidence for the date of the Kushan King, Kanishka I, by N. Schindel	27
A new early series of ancient Indian punchmarked coins from the 'Whorl' <i>Janapada</i> , by T. Hardaker	31
Classification of Ratna Deva's silver coins, by K. Singh	35
Shams al-Din Ahmad Shah's coins, by S M I Alam	38
Siraj al-Din 'Sikandar' (?) Shah – a new ruler of the Bengal Sultanate, by N. Nasir & M S Islam	39
The heavy rupees of Shah 'Alam II Bahadur, by A S DeShazo	40
A Mughal-style copper dam from the Bombay mint, by P. Stevens	41
How to read the legends on coins of the Western Kshatrapas: a beginner's guide, by P. Tandon	43
Georgian-Hulagid Christian coinage: a new denomination in the name of Abagha?, by I. Paghava & I. Myasnikov	47



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