

ONS



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ONS NEWS

Digitisation of the Journal

In the last twelve months the Numismatic Chronicle has been made available on the online service JSTOR. This is a good example of the trend for journals to make archives of past issues available free of charge, known as 'open source'. The committee of the Oriental Numismatic Society has been considering a proposal to do the same with the ONS Journal.

The proposal would raise funds for back issues of the journal to be scanned and digitised. The membership information that was published in each journal, such as addresses, would be removed so that it would not be made available more widely than the members of the society. These electronic files would then be available through the society's website for anyone interested in Oriental Numismatics to consult.

If this happened, the most recent issues of the journal would only become available after two or three years and members would continue to enjoy early access to all of the content, as well as all of the advantages of a physical copy. This seems to be a standard model that many journals have adopted.

It is expected that authors would want to see their articles available online where they can have the widest possible readership. However, if any author would rather their article did not appear or wished to have an article that went online removed the editors would arrange that. And likewise if members have concerns or thoughts about this proposal they are encouraged to share them with the editors and council.

There are still many technical hurdles to overcome and many hours of work but we will keep everyone updated on the progress of this project.

Obituary: Alexander Boris Lissanevitch (20 Feb. 1952 - 6 June 2014)

Alexander L. was born in Kathmandu, the son of a Russian father and a Danish mother. I met Alexander nearly 40 years ago in 1974 in Kathmandu. At that time he was married with his first wife Gita, a Nepali lady from Kurseong with whom he had two children, Boris and Tamara. Tamara died tragically when she was around 20 years old, while Boris is now residing in Australia working in hotel management.

Alexander's second marriage was to Kabita Regmi with whom he had two daughters and one son: Aslesha, Ayesha and Ivanhoe.

His father, Boris Nikolayevich Lissanevitch, is remembered by many foreigners as the person who, in the 1950s, initiated tourism in Nepal after having opened the Hotel Royal in Kathmandu and subsequently Kathmandu's most famous restaurant "The Chimney", visited by nearly all well-known Himalayan mountaineers, by writers and other VIPs who came to Nepal.

Alexander was an avid collector of Nepalese and Tibetan coins when I met him in 1974. He kindled and furthered my own interest

in this subject. He was a friend of several outstanding Western collectors of coins of Tibet and Nepal, namely Carlo Valdetaro, Nicholas Rhodes, and Wesley Halpert whose collections were enriched with the help of Alexander. In the 1980s he sold some very rare Tibetan coins from his personal collection to Wesley Halpert, coins which in 2000 he would buy back when Halpert decided to sell his collection in an auction held by Spink in New York.

When Tibet was opened to foreigners in the 1980s, Alexander took this opportunity and travelled to Lhasa almost every year to look for Tibetan coins, banknotes and antiques. During every one of these journeys he came back with at least one outstanding and rare item which he could add to his collection of Tibetan coins which grew to be the most extensive which was ever assembled outside of Tibet.

He loved to tell the anecdote when he heard that two rare Tibetan pattern coins were with an elderly dealer in Lhasa whom Alexander knew. He flew immediately to Lhasa and heard that the old dealer was in hospital. Alexander found out in which hospital the dealer was staying, went there with a present of fruit and, after the usual small talk, mentioned the two coins. Eventually the old man pulled out a small leather bag from under his clothes and showed Alexander the two rarities. A price was agreed and Alexander was happy to have been able to add two outstanding rarities to his collection.

In 2013 Alexander had to undergo a complicated operation in a hospital in Singapore after he had been diagnosed with a rare form of cancer which had affected the pleura (the tissue which protects the lungs). After the operation he had to spend some time in a rented apartment in Singapore with his wife Kabita in order to recover from the difficult operation. At this time I was preparing the auction catalogue of the Tibet collection of Nicholas Rhodes and sent the draft to Alexander, who was happy to have some fascinating reading while he had to relax in Singapore and could not lead an active life. I met Alexander in August 2013 in Hong Kong during and following the auction of the Rhodes collection (21st August 2013). He still felt quite weak and had pain in the area of the lungs and often had to go back to his room in the Marina Club to have longer rests.

In November of the same year I met Alexander again in Nepal where I visited him together with a young collector from Beijing whom we had both met in Hong Kong and who decided to visit Kathmandu after we had encouraged him to make a journey to Nepal. Alexander told me that, apparently, the Singapore operation was not fully successful and that he had to travel to New Delhi for chemotherapeutical treatments. Although he still felt quite weak Alexander was in a good mood and proudly showed some of his Tibetan treasures in the form of rare coins to us.

In April 2014 Alexander was still able to travel from Kathmandu to Hong Kong to participate in coin auctions and

attend to personal business. Back in Kathmandu his illness became more serious and the hope for a recovery dwindled.

A great collector and a friend has gone who loved to share his enthusiasm and his new discoveries with his friends and fellow collectors, always offering warm hospitality when the opportunity arose. The best tribute I could possibly pay to him would be by bringing to fruition the project of a comprehensive catalogue of Tibetan coins which Alexander had in mind and which we discussed quite often when we met each other.

Together with Nicholas Rhodes Alexander Lissanevitch has published the following articles in the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society:

Rhodes, Nicholas and Lissanevitch, Alexander: "A new variety of Gold Tola of King Tribhuvana", *ONS Newsletter* No. 179, Jan. 2004 (also published in *Mudraa, Newsletter of Nepal Numismatic Society*, No. 1 (Oct. 2004), p.3).

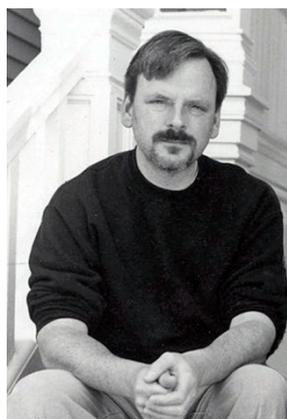
Rhodes, Nicholas and Lissanevitch, Alexander: "New Sho-kang from Tibet". In: *ONS Newsletter*, No. 182, winter 2005, p. 23. [This article describes and illustrates a unique pattern for a shokang, dated 15-51. The copper coin has an obverse similar to the 2 ½ skar coin Y 16.1 and an unusual reverse with the design of a *norbu* in the centre.]

Rhodes, Nicholas and Lissanevitch, Alexander B.: "The First Gold Coin of Tibet". *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*, no. 202, Ringwood, U.K., Winter 2010, p. 44-45.

A discussion of an early Tibetan "Shri Mangalam Tangka" struck in gold from the collection of Alexander Lissanevitch.

Wolfgang Bertsch

Obituary: Thomas K. Mallon - McCorgray



The international numismatic community lost a shining light with the recent passing of Thomas K. Mallon-McCorgray (1956-2014). There seem to be two kinds of people on the stage of life: those about whom we know too much and those about whom we know too little. Tom was clearly in the latter group—which in itself says a lot about him. A native New Yorker, Tom moved to San Francisco in 1976 and launched an active and successful musical career as an "indie" producer, engineer and musician, playing

drums and bass with several bands. He founded Grifter Records in the SoMa district and opened vistas for many that could never have been realised without his pioneering work. This was a time when the production cost of demos or albums was beyond the reach of most startup groups and Tom bridged that gap. Those early groups that he worked with moulded the Bay Area's punk and pop music scene of the 80s and 90s. Many of them returned or reunited for "TomFest", an emotional Spring 2013 benefit performance in his honour.

Fortunately for the numismatic community, Tom also had a passion for ancient and medieval coins. His focus here, like most of his interests, was esoteric and challenging—the coins of Central Asia. Many coin collectors have never heard of the Hephthalites or Inalids and would cringe at the prospect of finding Sogdiana or ancient Bactria on a map of the world. Yet Tom, an amateur and independent researcher, knew as much about these coins and their history as many professionals in the field. He was a voracious reader, with a keenly analytical mind, whose advice and assistance were constantly sought, generously given, and widely appreciated. Tom's important contributions and dedicated support of coinproject.com online were invaluable. His web page at academia.edu is filled with downloadable statistical and visual analyses in the fields of Kushan, Sasanian and Parthian coins. A bookmark to Tom's personal web site, The Coins and History of Asia (www.grifterrec.com/coins/coins.html), is essential for

anyone interested in the coinage of this region. In addition to providing a valuable education, it is an absolute visual delight.

Weakened by a long and valiant struggle with glioblastoma multiform (GBM), Tom succumbed to a cancerous brain tumour on January 9th of this year. A memorial service was held on Sunday, February 23rd, in San Francisco's Mission District. He is survived by his wife Nancie and three sons — Thom, Virgil and Francis. The youngest, Francis, is currently in 6th grade. The family has expressed their desire and intention to maintain his widely acclaimed web site in its present form.

Wayne G. Sayles

Help Fill in the Gaps in the Oriental Numismatics Collection of the Harry W. Bass Jr. Library

The American Numismatic Society not only houses one of the largest collections of Oriental coins in the world, it also publishes books on Oriental numismatics, including a soon-forthcoming major study of Kushan coinage and a study of the banknotes of the Imperial Bank of Persia. Naturally, the Society's Harry W. Bass Jr. Library would like to keep pace. But it is difficult for the staff to identify what has been published in Oriental numismatics without input from specialists in Islamic, South Asia, Southeast Asian and East Asian numismatics.

That is where Prof. Jere L. Bacharach comes in. Prof. Bacharach, an ANS Trustee as well as a member of the Oriental Numismatic Society, has been diligently checking each issue of the Journal of the Oriental Numismatics Society (JONS) and then consulting with the Bass Library staff to help identify what items the library is missing. The effort is rewarding: a review of the past four issues of JONS, for example, revealed that there are 13 recently published works the library does not own.

Still, identifying such missing items is not quite enough. There remains the critical issue of securing the funds to acquire them. And that is the point at which Dr Ute Wartenberg Kagan, Executive Director of the ANS, enters the picture. Dr Wartenberg Kagan has found an anonymous donor who will contribute up to \$1,000 in matching funds, in blocks of \$50, to buy books listed in JONS that the ANS does not have. That is, for each U.S. tax-deductible gift of \$50 to the ANS "Oriental Numismatic Book Fund," that donor will contribute another \$50 to buy books exclusively in this field. These resulting \$100 blocks will ensure that the Harry W. Bass Jr. Library can purchase books on Oriental numismatics in a timely fashion, while they are still available in the market, from a fund dedicated to their acquisition.

Dr Wartenberg Kagan is thrilled with this initiative, and she hopes it will encourage enthusiasts in other numismatic specialties to consider launching their own dedicated funds.

Those dedicated to Oriental numismatics, though, now have no need to wait. If you would like to support scholarship in the field, please send a check made out to "American Numismatic Society— Oriental Numismatic Book Fund," and mail it to the American Numismatic Society, 75 Varick Street, Floor 11, New York, N.Y. 10013 USA, or click the Donate button below and donate online. Be sure to note that your gift is for the "Oriental Numismatic Book Fund."

Thank you for your support!

Forthcoming Meetings in Delhi and Mumbai

The Indian Coin markets seem to be in a vibrant mode as evident from numerous Coin fairs and auctions being organized all over India. The ONS has benefitted from its association with these events. Mumbai saw 'COINEX MUMBAI 2014' held on 7, 8 and 9 November with over 60 stalls and 5 Auctions by Coin Auctioneers like Oswal Auctions, Todywalla Auctions, Bombay Auctions and Bhargav Auctions.

The ONS has been able to get the sponsorship for its New Delhi meeting courtesy Mr. Shatrughan Saravagi (Classical Numismatic Gallery). The New Delhi ONS Meeting is being organized on 21 December 2014 at Hotel Connaught in New Delhi. Another ONS Meeting is being organized on 25 January 2015 in Mumbai. Both meetings are expected to have numismatic

papers and discussions by leading numismatists for the benefit of the ONS' increasing number of South Asian members.



Left to right: Mahesh Kalra (ONS Regional Secretary) with COINEX organizers Girish Veera, Sudip Khera, and Abdul Razzak.

Forthcoming Meetings in London and Oxford

The dates of the next five meetings in the UK are listed below. Those interested in speaking or wanting more information should contact Robert Bracey (robert@kushan.org) for meetings in London and Shailendra Bhandare (shailen10@hotmail.com) for meetings in Oxford. All meetings will commence at 11.00am.

- 29 November 2014 Oxford Seminar Day
- 21 February 2015 London Seminar Day
- 23 May 2015 Oxford Seminar Day
- 25 July 2015 London Seminar Day
- 21 November 2015 Oxford Seminar Day

Boris Kochnev Memorial Seminar on Middle Eastern and Central Asian Numismatics

On Saturday, 14 March 2015, the Middle Eastern and Central Asian Program at Hofstra University will hold the Seventh Seminar on Middle Eastern and Central Asian Numismatics in Memoriam Boris Kochnev (1940-2002).

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please send the title of your talk by 15 January. We are planning to form the programme by 1 February. By March 1 we expect brief abstracts of papers for pre-publication. The geography of presentations can range from the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea to the deserts of Xinjiang, while the time frame is limited to pre-Modern times. Each talk will be allocated 25 minutes + 5 minutes for questions. For more information contact: aleksandr.naymark@hofstra.edu.

During six previous seminars participants included: Abigail Balbale (Bard Graduate Center, New York), Michael Bates (American Numismatic Society, New York), Arianna D'Ottone (La Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy), Abdullah Ghouchani (Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran), Stefan Heidemann (Hamburg University, Germany), Judith Kolbas (Central Asian Numismatic Institute at Cambridge University, England), Konstantin Kravtsov (Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia), Dmirtry Markov (Markov Coins and Medals, New York), Aleksandr Naymark (Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York), Stuart Sears (Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts), Warren Schults (DePaul University, Chicago), Nicholas Sims-Williams (SOAS, London University, England), Pankaj Tandon (Boston University), Li Tiesheng (Beijing, China), Luke Treadwell (Oxford University, England), Daniel Varisco (Hofstra University) and Waleed Ziad (Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut).

Currencies of Commerce Conference

An International Conference on 'Currencies of Commerce in the Greater Indian Ocean World' is to be held at McGill University Montreal, Canada 22-24 April. There is a registration fee and the full details of the conference can be found online at <http://indianoceanworldcentre.com/2015currencyconference>.

Leiden meeting 18 October 2014

Because of the closure of the Geldmuseum in Utrecht at the end of 2013, the ONS had to look for another venue for their annual meeting in the Netherlands. In JONS 219 we were able to announce that, thanks to our member, Dr Ellen Raven of the department of South and South East Asian Studies of the Leiden Institute of Area Studies (LIAS), the meeting could be held at the premises of Leiden University. So, after a period of 7 years the annual ONS meeting in the Netherlands again took place in Leiden.

Some 30 members, mostly from the host country, but also from neighbouring countries, assembled for a the usual welcome with tea and coffee at the Pakhuis restaurant a short distance from the university. From around 10.30 a series of presentations and short talks were given in one of the university lecture rooms.

After a word of welcome by our host, Dr Ellen Raven, Frans Weijer presented the first paper 'An introduction to the Coinage of Axum'.



Frans Wijer speaking on Axumite coins

The purchase of an auction lot of Axumite coins at a sale in Germany many years previously formed the nucleus of this collection and the reason for his research into its history, origins and culture. Axum on the crossroad of African trade routes was, in the early centuries of the first millennium, an important trade emporium for gold, ivory and grain. He gave the audience a vivid account of this and how it is reflected on the coinage of Axum, which can lay claim to being the first bi-metallic currency, copper with gold inlay.



Klaus Bronny presenting his book on the coinage of Bhutan

For the next presentation the audience was taken across the Asian continent to the Kingdom of Bhutan. Our late Secretary-General, Nicholas Rhodes, was the author and co-author of several publications on the numismatic history of the Himalayan region. Except for his ONS Information Sheet no. 16, the numismatic history of Bhutan had thus far remained a gap in this series. More or less in a race against the clock Klaus Bronny was able to present his book "The coinage of Bhutan An overview from the earliest times about 1790 until the first machine-struck coins in

1928” at our meeting as the printed copies had just been received the day before from the printer. The book, hardbound and fully colour-printed, is not only appealing to the eyes, but contains a wealth of information on a much neglected series. In his presentation, Klaus Bronny explained the origin, development and typology of the coinage. The late Nicholas Rhodes, wrote in ONS Information Sheet no. 16 on ‘The Coinage of Bhutan’ “*No catalogue of Bhutanese coins can ever hope to be complete. Until 1928 every die was hand cut, and most of these dies differ from all other dies in some feature.*” This was Klaus Bronny’s motivation and starting point for a classified overview of this subject and, as it turned out, it seems that he succeeded well in his endeavours. (See also the review by Wolfgang Bertsch on p.5 below).

For those interested, this privately published book is available from the author klausbronny@hotmail.com and a preview can be seen on <http://klausbronny.jimdo.com/> , ISBN 978-3-00-044412-8

Following a break for lunch, two more papers were presented by Henk Groenendijk and Ellen Raven, respectively.

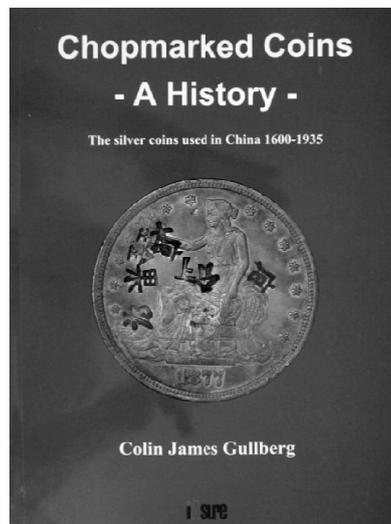
The subject of Henk Groenendijk’s presentation was a newly published book by Colin James Gullberg entitled: *Chopmarked Coins - A History: The silver coins used in China 1600-1935*.



Henk Groenendijk during his presentation

Groenendijk explained the chopmarking of coins by Chinese merchants. Chinese merchants came to prefer the “Carolus” 8-reales of Spain of 1772-1810. They called them “Four Work” because the Roman numerals in the king’s name CAROLVS IIII looked like the Chinese character *gong* (work). Charles IV, however, passed away, and Spain lost its American colonies. New coins came from an independent Mexico. Even though the Mexican “Cap and Rays” coins were equivalent to the Carolus issues (27.07 grams; .903 fine), the older coins were preferred and commanded a premium.

He also pointed out that, for many numismatic authorities, anything that happened to a coin apart from the actual, intended minting process was tantamount to damage; and damage lowered the value and collectability of a coin. Chopmarked coins, therefore, had long been considered damaged coins. Nonetheless, a small but growing group of collectors had come to find them alluring in their own right. Unfortunately, until now, information about chopmarks had been slight, often unattributed and contradictory. By showing several examples illustrated in this new book he amply illustrated that the book would serve as a much-needed authoritative overview of the marks themselves and the coins that carried them.



The first edition of the book was published in June 2014, iAsure Group, ISBN: 978-0-9905200-0-9

Size: A4, paper covers. 188 pages. Price: \$40 for CCC members (\$50 retail) (\$30 for bulk orders of over 5 copies) (Plus shipping & handling). To order: email the editor at:



Ellen Raven talking about Gupta forgeries

The academic session was concluded by Ellen Raven with a synopsis of the presentation she had given earlier in the year in Stockholm on ‘Gupta gold coin forgeries’. The imitating and forging of coins had been going on for centuries but modern technology, together with the increasing prices of certain coin series made the forging of coins a lucrative business for the forgers, but obviously a nuisance for the researcher and usually a financial loss for the collector. Ellen Raven showed several examples of forgeries and also their original pedigree. Although experienced collectors might be able to distinguish between authentic specimens and later imitations she introduced a more scientific way of detecting forgeries. A particular phenomenon in the Gupta series is the increasing weight over a period of time. The mint-masters in the golden age of the Guptas proved to have been extremely accurate. The average variation in weight of a number of specimens of a particular type often showed a marginal (?) deviation of 0.1 g. She emphasized the importance of taking accurate weights. By taking account of the particular weight specific to a particular type/ruler, the nature of the Brahmi script, combined with the mint-idiom of a series, some of the most deceptive forgeries could be detected.

The session at the University was concluded by an auction of oriental coins and related books. In total, there were 185 lots and bidding on most of them was keen, not only from those attending the meeting, but also by some members sending in proxy bids by post or via the internet. All in all, some 700 euros were generated for the ONS. Our thanks are due to all those who supplied the material for the auction as well as those who took part in the bidding.

After an introductory section follows the catalogue proper which is divided into two parts: The first part is entitled "Group Index", presenting the major coin types, chronologically divided into groups following Nicholas Rhodes works on the coinage of Bhutan. Line drawings which point out in red the main distinguishing features, are very helpful in identifying the different types in a relatively short time.

The second part is entitled "Overview as a detailed listing" which follows the framework established in the first part, and lists the coins with brief descriptions and references to metal and measurements on one page and good-quality photographs of the actual coins and their variants on the opposite page. The idea of presenting descriptions of coins and coin pictures together on two facing pages is very user friendly, saving the reader the cumbersome action of looking at the plates in the back of the book and leafing back to the text part, as is necessary in the case of most traditional numismatic works dedicated to specific series of coins.

The second part of the catalogue is followed by a brief discussion of some silver coins from neighbouring countries or areas which reached Bhutan by way of trade and were subsequently used within Bhutan. A comprehensive bibliography concludes the book which will now be the standard reference for the coinage of Bhutan.

No reviewer will be content without being able to include some critical remarks or offer some suggestions. Here are a few:

On table two (page 16) the "squares" and "circles" should have been identified as "king's earrings" and "queen's earrings" and the syllable "d'Bang" ("power") should be transliterated without apostrophe: "dbang"

The first machine-struck coins are most probably not those struck by the Calcutta mint featuring the portrait of the second "dragon king" Jigme Wangchuk, but those numbered as 60.43 F1 to 60.43 F4 and the rare mongoose coin no. 39.14 - both types may have been struck in 1909 or 1910 under the authority of Gongzim Ugyen Dorji (Penlop of Ha) with a coin press located in the Bhutan house in Kalimpong and with dies supplied by the Calcutta mint (Rhodes, Coinage in Bhutan, *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Autumn 1999, p. 104 and 109).

Some collectors may wish for more background information and references to the grade of rarity of the coins. However, as this information can be found in the three seminal works by N.G. Rhodes (listed in the bibliography on p. 176), K. Bronny may have thought it unnecessary to repeat what has very ably been set out already.

No. 40.09 and 40.10: one should perhaps point out that these are the heaviest hand-struck coins produced in Bhutan and possibly have to be considered as trial strikes, allowing a better appreciation of the complete design of the dies which is not possible on the normal coinage as the diameter of flans is always considerably smaller than the diameter of dies. Also the unique coins listed as nos. 60.42 S1 and 60.42 C1 from a private collection in Nepal may have been trial strikes made for the same purpose and were not intended for circulation.

Other pieces which were probably not intended for circulation and could be considered as experimental or presentation pieces are the rare silver coins of rupee weight listed as no. 01.07c, 02.07 and 02.08. The first one is the only known Bhutanese silver coin struck to the standard of the British Indian rupee and was published by Nicholas Rhodes (An 18th Century Bhutanese Rupee, *ONS Newsletter*, July-August 1987) who considered the possibility that the coin may have been struck as an experiment soon after the closure of the Cooch Behar mint in AD1788 and states "When it was clear that the people preferred the old, light, Narayani Rupee, no further pieces were struck to the heavy standard". The other two pieces (02.07 and 02.08) are of a lighter standard and according to Rhodes "seem to be Double Deb Rupees".

It may also be worthwhile to mention that coin no. 03.01 is struck over a Sino-Tibetan Two Sho silver coin of the Xuan Tong era. The weight of this coin is 8.85 g (and not 4.80 g as recorded by Bronny) and it was discussed by Nicholas Rhodes (A new Bhutanese Silver Coin, *ONS Journal*, no. 152, 1997, p. 11) who pointed out that it represents a firm "terminus post quem" of AD

1910 (the year when the Tibetan host coin was struck) and that it is die-linked with a whole group of copper coins which Rhodes originally had assigned to period III (c. 1865-1900). Hence the period of this group has to be extended to at least 1910 and the copper coins die-linked with the silver coin no. 03.01 can be dated to AD 1910 or slightly later.

In this context one may mention that, on p. 14, Klaus Bronny gives a summary of Rhodes' chronological framework which divides the Bhutanese coins into four distinct groups, but in his catalogue he assigns dates to only two groups, namely the first dated 1790-1840 (p. 18), comprising of the early silver coinage and some copper issues and the second dated 1840-1900 (which should be changed to ca. 1910/11) mainly comprising copper and brass coins. The coins struck after 1910 (i.e. three years after the coronation of the first king) are not assigned to an exact period by Bronny, but it has to be understood that they were struck between c. 1910 and 1928 (the coins featuring as line drawings on pages 26-29) and that they fall within period IV of Rhodes (c.1900 – 1928) which in the light of coin no. 03.01 should be shortened to c. 1910/11 – 1928. In the introduction on page 9 Klaus Bronny mentions that it is not his main concern to classify the coins chronologically as has been done by Nicholas Rhodes, but to fit the "countless die variants" into groups and subgroups (one should add: "without always considering the period during which they were struck").

When discussing the Yuan Shikai dollar on p. 172 credit should be given to Nicholas Rhodes (Rhodes, Nicholas G.: "A Communist Chinese Restrike". *Spink's Numismatic Circular*, Vol. 83, London, 1975, p. 239–240) who was the first person to point out that the pieces with "closed triangle" in the upper part of the Chinese character for "yuan" on the reverse are most probably the restrikes (not counterfeits) which were produced in the 1950s for use in Tibet. For a further discussion of these restrikes one may refer to the following page of the website www.zeno.ru:

<http://www.zeno.ru/showphoto.php?photo=16199&sortby=f&sorttime=9999&way=asc>

and also:

http://www.coincommunity.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=8495

Finally it may have been useful to mention that some modern forgeries of rare types of Bhutanese copper coins were offered during the last three years by an Ebay-dealer from Kazakhstan using the username "2010alex2007". This is the first time that modern forgeries of hand-struck Bhutanese coins have been noted and reflects the increasing interest which collectors seem to take in this "exotic" coin series. An example of these forgeries can be seen on the excellent Russian webpage of oriental coins "www.zeno.ru":

<http://www.zeno.ru/showfull.php?photo=126544>



Modern forgery of a Bhutanese coin
Weight 5.9 g, diameter 18.5 by 20.8 mm.

The forgery is not only much heavier than its genuine counterparts, but it stands out by having smooth edges, while most genuine coins of this period have sharp edges which most probably are due to the fact that planchets were cut out from copper sheet by using shears.

Here and there the English text of the coin descriptions could have been improved but, excepting a few cases, it is clear and comprehensible.

In summary one may state that Klaus Bronny has succeeded in offering a systematic overview of a bewildering amount of coin types and varieties which allows the reader to easily identify a

certain Bhutanese coin and at the same time see which related pieces exist and may be interesting to acquire for his own collection. He has shown how the early coins evolved from their prototypes of Cooch Behar, how eventually the Bhutanese coin designers gave up the basic pattern inherited from the Cooch Beharis and created new designs, packed with Buddhist symbolism which was more familiar to the users of the coins. In the same time he has succeeded in presenting a convincing and easy to use system of cataloguing the sheer endless number of Bhutanese coin varieties. No author of a coin catalogue can claim to have written a complete survey, this goes particularly for a catalogue dedicated to the coinage of Bhutan. But it can be comprehensive, and there is no doubt that Bronny's book deserves this attribute and can be highly recommended to anybody interested in Bhutan and more particularly to numismatists interested in the coinage of South-Asia.

Klaus Bronny's publication can also serve as an "eye-opener" for persons who are not numismatists, but are interested in Bhutanese culture. The book can show that the coinage of Bhutan is an important part of this culture, a part which so far has been ignored in the numerous exhibitions dedicated to Bhutanese art or culture in general which were organized in Europe, Japan, and USA.

Wolfgang Bertsch

Articles

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

III) THE METROLOGICAL AND TYPOLOGICAL EVOLUTION UNDER THE KINGS OUSANAS I AND WZB*

By Wolfgang Hahn

During the time when Ousanas bisi Dimele, the third king to issue coins, reigned in Aksum the Roman standard gold coin, conventionally called an aureus, of $\frac{1}{60}$ pound's weight (5.45g = 96 chalkoi) was replaced in the Eastern half of the empire by Constantine's lighter solidus of $\frac{1}{72}$ pound (4.54g = 80 chalkoi = 24 carats), following the annexation of Licinius' domain in 324, which meant a weight reduction by $\frac{1}{6}$. Simultaneously, as a sign of the empire's recovered stability, a limited production of fine quality silver coins was resumed in the Roman Empire¹ for which the official value of silver seems to have been raised by $\frac{1}{5}$, so that the gold/silver ratio was altered from 1:15 to 1:12². Apparently this revaluation of the metals had a far reaching impact even on the Aksumite coinage.

Ousanas I (early 320s to mid-340s AD)

When dealing with the coins carrying the name Ousanas the question arises whether we have to reckon with more than one king of this name. For this period we can set aside a certain Ousanas who belongs in the Christian 6th century. But a theory (which I too had once advocated) surmised the existence of two Ousanas in the 4th century by attributing some types of silver and copper coins (but not gold) to a king succeeding Ezanas after c.370. The following considerations should help to finally reject this conjecture, whence the number of coin issuing kings is reduced to 18.

The pagan Ousanas who followed Aphilas apparently had a lively minting of gold coins³, but with decreasing weights and without the fractions of his predecessor – if he did not continue to have small eighth chrysoi of Aphilas struck for a while under the name of this king. Ousanas' earlier chrysoi are similar in style to those of Aphilas and still without privy marks (H.13a1); they tend to the old weight (of 48 chalkoi), but soon the previously

mentioned reduction becomes perceivable from a peak on the frequency table of weights, pointing to a Constantinian half solidus (semissis) of 2.26g (40 chalkoi). Besides, a marking of the issues begins in the form of various pellets which were applied on both sides of the coins around the crescent (H.13a2)⁴. A large star of 8 rays, however, positioned under the crescent on a single rev. die (H.13b) – possibly the morning star (the symbol of Astar = Venus) – seems to represent a typological element of significance as will be argued below.

When the weight of the chrysoi was reduced the silver coins had to follow and they too fell by $\frac{1}{5}$ so that the argyroi of the old type (H.13) came to a theoretical weight of 1.81g ($\frac{1}{15}$ of an ounce) and according to the altered gold/silver ratio 15 argyroi now had the value of 1 of the lighter chrysoi.

The chrysargyros (H.14a), viz. the coin with the gilt clipeus (round shield bust) and valued at 2 chalkoi (reckoned in gold) now needed to have the weight of only 12 chalkoi of silver ($\frac{1}{40}$ ounce) in order to represent one half of the coin's value, to which the one chalkous of the gilding was added. Thus the coin as a whole has a theoretical weight of 0.74g. Of this coin 20 pieces went to the lighter chrysos (instead of 24 before to the heavier gold coin). Under Ousanas the legend on the side of the clipeus was to start with the crescent at 12:00. Therefore the word-separator used on the issue of Aphilas at 6:00 was no longer needed. The legend is continued on the other side with the ethnicon.

Some time about the middle of Ousanas' reign the gilding of the clipeus was suspended⁵ after which these coins (H.14b) only kept their silver weight of $\frac{1}{40}$ ounce (0.68g), i.e. the equivalent of 1 chalkous of gold. During this phase of mintage privy marks began to appear there too.

The value of 2 chalkoi of gold as a silver denomination was nevertheless continued but thenceforth represented by a coin of a new type, without an inlay of gold and therefore having the double weight of the small coin with the non-gilt clipeus. The newly introduced type does not show the crescent of the moon god Mahrem over the king's head and has therefore been labelled as "without religious symbol", an unhappy term as it was thought to indicate a transitional stage of religious indifference preceding the open declaration of the conversion to Christianity.

The omission of the crescent must have had another reason: it allowed the extension of the king's image from top to bottom, dividing the legend into two halves. This composition fitted into the space available which had diminished when another symbol made its debut on this type: the triple rim. Its function as a protection of the coin's edge against clipping did not work well, because in most cases the flan was not broad enough to accept the complete imprint of all three rims – a broader flan would have been very thin and thus even more liable to cracking.

Therefore the triple rim (which was to become a longer lasting feature) had more of an iconographical meaning. It is also known from Sasanian coins as well as in later times on Arab and Byzantine coins and is thought to carry a cosmological symbolism⁶, referring to the three main elements of the universe (heaven, earth and sea). In the monumental inscriptions of the pagan period thanksgivings of the kings to the deities Mahren, Meder and Beher (in Greek: Ares, Demeter and Poseidon) is worded. The coins had only room for small symbols to express this intention. In this way we should be able to understand why the crescent and the corn ears became superfluous on the coins with the triple rim, their meaning being included therein. Later on its symbolism could easily be reinterpreted in a Christian sense – from which, regrettably, I had derived my earlier conjecture of a second Ousanas, already Christian, and thought that the triple rim was introduced by him as the successor (brother) of Ezanas. Certainly we have to dispose of this phantom king.

But though we do not have to count on a second Ousanas in the 4th century a possibility is left that there may have been two reigns of one and the same king, interrupted by a colleague, namely Wzb. On this solution we shall dwell below.

To divide the legends on the triple rim type symmetrically into two parts an equal number of letters would have been preferred. Ousanas' name included 7 letters which at first were partitioned

into 4+3 (H.25.1) or 3+4 (H.25.), but then the symmetry was achieved by cutting the final (euphonic) letter S so that the result was 3+3 (H.25.3). This arrangement was also transferred to the reverse (although the word *basi-leus* allowed a symmetry of 4+4). The form *bas-ile*, however, required an abbreviation mark (I) at the end⁷ so that the result was only formally symmetrical.

The copper coinage of Ousanas I is rather sparsely attested⁸ as is the case with all copper of the pagan period. It has augmented the previous inventory of types by a new, somewhat uneven, peculiar combination (H.26): The obverse is similar to that of the gold coins with the king's bust under the crescent and flanked by two ears of corn; its legend was continued with the ethnicon on the reverse, which, however, in contrast used the triple rim type. As required there the legend should be divided into groups of 3+3 letters. It reads AΞ+ ωMI thus completing the numbers by the insertion of a small cross as a filler. Possibly one could also understand it as the Fidal letter Thawi being used to denote the numeral 10, but it must certainly not be taken as the Christian symbol (and therefore not as a testimony to a second Ousanas!).

Taking all the coins together Ousanas' minting seems to indicate a relatively long reign⁹. He might be identified with the king who set up the (now nameless) inscription at Meroe which announces a victorious campaign against Nubia in the 21st year of his reign¹⁰. But the official count of regnal years did not necessarily follow his real accession as supreme ruler. Ousanas seems to have succeeded to Aphilas within the early 320s and he may have reigned into the middle of the 340s.

Wzb negus, a "nationalist" interlude ? (c. +/- 335)

Near in time to Ousanas another king of Aksum must be located who calls himself in unvocalised Geez *Wzb b(i)s(i) Zgly*. The use of the native idiom is quite isolated within the coins of the early (pagan) period. The clue to Ousanas consists in hybrid argyroi of the clipeus type which were struck from muled dies of both kings (H.16 with 14) so that they have the names of two kings, one on each side. This was possible because Ousanas had his name written on the clipeus side whereas Wzb repeated his name on the side without clipeus. The question is whether this muling was done deliberately or in error. In fact we have the choice between several possible theories which can guide our opinion on how Wzb was related to Ousanas.

If Wzb succeeded at Ousanas' death old dies of his predecessor could have slipped into the striking or were intended to be used up before new ones were available – this would be the simplest explanation. Otherwise Wzb could be thought as a temporary coruler of Ousanas before he became sole ruler. He might have even been a usurper who dethroned Ousanas and the old king could have returned to power after a while. Though this last possibility seems to be the most intricate it is in fact favoured by certain circumstances we can observe.

It appears that only coins of two denominations have been struck under Wzb: very rare chrysoi (H.15) and the small silvers of the clipeus type without gilding (H.16). Perhaps the extreme rarity (or rather the rare survival) of the gold coins resulted from their not being inscribed in Greek and therefore alien to Roman traders as the main acceptors¹¹. The silver coinage renders more arguments: its restriction to one denomination – triple rim coins being unknown for Wzb (if we set aside a type of very doubtful authenticity discussed below) – gives cause for concern, if this type of double argyroi had not been introduced after Wzb who in turn could have been the king responsible for giving up the gilding of the clipeus coins. Most instructive is the occasional occurrence of die-identical triple rim reverses shared by Ousanas and his son Ezanas¹²; they seem to prove a direct sequence of these two kings, i.e. without a disrupting Wzb. On the other hand Wzb cannot be thought of as being earlier than Ousanas and succeeding to Aphilas because he did not strike old style argyroi (like Ousanas in continuance from Aphilas) and the weight of his chrysoi is too light to precede the heavier gold of Ousanas.

To surmise a more or less short-lived takeover by Wzb, perhaps at the head of a national-religious opposition against the Hellenising court, could be the solution derivable from this

evidence. Such an impression is reinforced by certain remarkable details of the image to be found on the chrysoi. Both the examples hitherto known have in common the insertion of a monogram under the crescent over the king's head on the obverse as well as on the reverse. It repeats the personal name of the king (which is already contained in the obverse legend). Monograms of this kind are well known as traditional on South Arabian coins of previous centuries. On Aksumite coins they will reappear only in the late 5th century.

On the reverse of both chrysoi the royal bust with the headcloth is surrounded by a halo, apparently in parallel to the clipeus of the silver coin. Otherwise they differ conspicuously. The added pellets perhaps merely served as issue marks but the king's equipment is most significant. One specimen (H.15a) depicts Wzb on the obverse holding the spear together with the branch in his right hand whereas the reverse shows him holding a peculiarly bent crozier – perhaps a sacerdotal instrument (*lituus*) – instead of the branch (having been transferred to the obverse). The other coin does without the branch at all and introduces an object which looks like a stem with a poppy seed capsulehead, another symbol of Demeter (besides the ears of corn). These accoutrements vary from the standard typology and thus could be taken as a special emphasis within the religious cult, in line with the "Ethiopianisation" of the coins.

If indeed Ousanas had a second reign it becomes imaginable that the star replacing the monogram of Wzb could mark a special, festive issue to celebrate his reinstatement¹³. The morning star as the symbol of Astar, a son (male) deity, in a position under the crescent might stress the ideological descent of Ousanas. It is too prominent for an issue mark.

The small silver coins of Wzb with the clipeus are known in relatively large numbers though not as frequently as those of Ousanas or Ezanas later on, rather more comparable to the issue of Aphilas¹⁴. Therefore we should suppose some length for Wzb's reign, perhaps several years.

Here mention must be made of silver coins displaying a Wzb type of very dubious authenticity¹⁵. Its abnormal typological composition might have been provoked by the extravagance of the genuine chrysoi. These Wzb coins must be seen in conjunction with other types, making up a group of fantasy coins¹⁶. There is reason to think that they were first distributed from a workshop in Asmara c.1960. Although these pieces have never turned up in excavations they irritated Aksumite numismatics, at least some of them being taken as truly ancient coins by several scholars. Perhaps they had originally been struck from dies cut by an expert hand, but centrifugal casting might have also been able to achieve sharp contours. Later on samples of a cruder appearance and cast in different metals appeared on the market in Addis Ababa.

Notes

* 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 (Fortsetzung : Ousanas und Wzb)", *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien* 48, 2014, 20-7.

¹ For the implications that the reordering of the silver coinage (with the introduction of the *miliarensis* denomination which had the same weight as the *solidus*) after Constantin's victory over Licinius have brought a thorough study is lacking and for the further evolution even the reference books do not offer more than some speculations based on a few hints in the literary sources (cf RIC X, p.13; VII, p.10; VIII, p.66; IX, p.29 – where a gold/silver ratio of 1:18 is inferred). Usually the old contribution of G. Mickwitz, *Die Systeme des römischen Silbergeldes im IV. Jhd n.Chr. ein Beispiel zur Anwendung der variationsstatistischen Methode in der Numismatik* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum VI/2, Helsingfors 1934) is quoted, but this is based on an insufficient quantity of weighed material. Evidence can only be gained from frequency tables filled with ample weight data in combination with deductions from the system of hexadic fractions (also to be considered when it comes to the extent by which the weight standards were reduced or raised).

² A temporary adoption of this especially convenient ratio was also surmised (if only after 348) by H. Mattingly, NC 1946, pp.16ff.

³ A first die study was undertaken by V. West, Research on Aksumite Coinage, London Numismatic Club Newsletter VIII/9, Jan. 2006, 15-24:

based on 35 specimens he arrived at 114 calculated upper dies and 95 lower dies (using the formula of W. Esty).

⁴ For Ousanas six variations have been noted.

⁵ Perhaps less than a quarter of Ousanas' extant clipeus coins have been gilt; on certain samples a slight lustre might delude us, but at that time the real gilding was still substantial.

⁶ Cf. R. Göbl, *Der mehrfache Münzbildrand und die Beziehungen zwischen Byzanz und dem Sasanidenreich*, *Jahrbuch d. Österr. Byzantinistischen Gesellschaft* 13, 1964, 10f; it is, however, not necessary to assume a mutual influence in any case.

⁷ It seems to be lacking on barbarised (secondary) dies only.

⁸ Copper coins of the triple rim silver type look like modern casts (AC 34).

⁹ Not recognising the numismatic evidence G. Fiaccadori (in his entry "Ousanas", *EAE* 4, Wiesbaden 2010, p.82) thought of a short reign for this king whom he provided with the (blundered) clan name Ella Azgagua taken from (spurious) hagiographical sources; furthermore he had him transmuted into an elder brother of Ezanas (instead of his father). According to my reading (cf. note 10) the first, damaged line of the pseudo-Sabaean inscription DAE 8 = RIE 186 contains the clan name of Ousanas, *bisi Gisene* (as found on the coins) and it is combined with the throne name Ella Amida, which was Ezanas' patronymic.

¹⁰ Cf G. Hatke, *Aksum and Nubia*, New York 2011, pp.70f.

¹¹ The two specimens only known do not show the double piercing so characteristic of Indian provenances; one was in the Ocelis hoard of 1911 in Yemen (cf. W. Hahn, *Eine Spurensuche im alten Yemen – Vom aksumitischen Ocelis zum türkischen Scheich Said*, *Money Trend* 32, 2000, no.10, 58-63).

¹² E. g. Schulman *July 1972*, 429 (Ousanas H.25) and *Münzzentrum Rheinland* 143, April 2008, 240 Ezanas H.22b).

¹³ On Roman coins such stars were often applied to designate a dynastic celebration. In this context even an astronomic apparition has been considered, however based on an earlier, non-pertinent dating.

¹⁴ The numbers of dies for striking the clipeus type for Aphilas / Ousanas / Wzb / Ezanas are in a proportion of 1 : 2 : 1 : 4.

¹⁵ AC (= S. Munro-Hay & B. Juel-Jensen, *Aksumite Coinage*, London 1995) no.16; Munro-Hay was uncertain whether the forgeries were cast from a genuine model coin.

¹⁶ There belong silver coins depicting the 5th c. king Mhdys (who also used Ethiopian legends; AC 69) and a type on which the king's name is left open by artificial fragmentation (AC 66). But the most revealing piece is a gold type of Wzb, showing the full figure of the king standing on one side and enthroned on the other side; it is still unpublished and only known to me from a crude cast.

WHERE WAS THE MINT OF "ARMĪNIYYA" LOCATED? A CASE FOR PROVINCIAL MINT ORGANIZATION¹

Dr. Aram Vardanyan

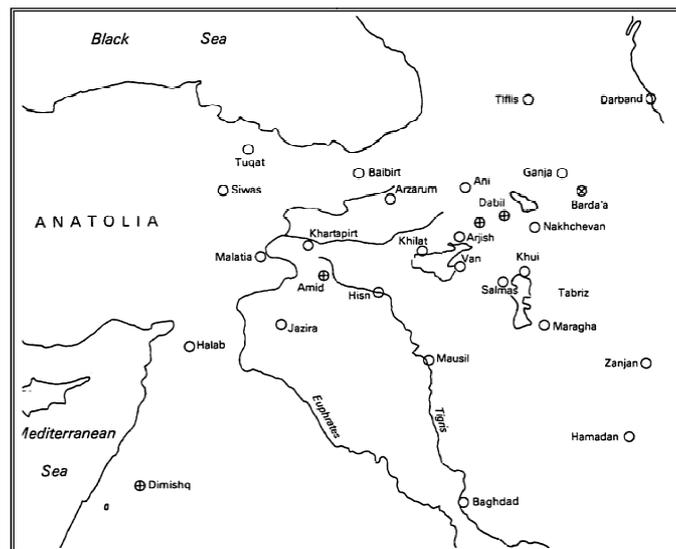
Abstract. This article offers some observations on the places where the coins with the mint-name Armīniyya were minted during the first four centuries of Islam. Using both literary sources and coins, an attempt is made to show that the mint of Armīniyya was not permanently located in the city of Dvin (Dabīl) of Armenia but could have been organized in other places related to historic Armenia and even outside the Armenia Highland. At the same time the coins of Armīniyya provide us with chronological limits for the collapse of the administrative and fiscal unit "Armīniyya" that existed from Umayyad times up to the end of the "Sāmarrā period" under the 'Abbāsids.

The Umayyad province of "Armīniyya" was formed during the reign of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (AD 685-705). It included a major part of the Armenian Highland and some adjacent territories including some parts of Caucasian Iberia.² The capital of the province was Dabīl (Arm. Dvin), which was one of the biggest cities in the region.³ It was at a strategic point of the caliphate in the north, forming a border between the Islamic Empire and the Khazar state. Dvin was also a very important administrative, social-economic and cultural centre of Armenia. At different periods, there was also a mint operating in the city. Coins with the mint-name Armīniyya are often attributed to the mint of Dvin.⁴ Issues bearing the mint-name of Armīniyya are today attested for a period from AH 78 to 353; the earliest coins appeared under the

Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik in AH 78, and the latest known are dated AH 353, from the period of the Sallārid domination in Armenia. From AH 78 to 332 the coins were struck with some frequency (excluding the gap of more than 30 years (AH 110-142) from the Umayyads to the 'Abbāsids). Within this time frame the history of coin production at the mint of Armīniyya can be divided into four main periods:

1. Umayyad (AH 78 - 110);
2. 'Abbāsīd (AH 142 - 277);
3. Sājīds and their successors (AH 284 - 332);
4. Sallārid (AH 353).

The question is: was Dvin the only place where coins with the mint-name Armīniyya were struck for more than 250 years? Evidence suggests that the coins bearing the mint-name Armīniyya were produced in at least five locations and those could be Dimashq, Dabīl, Barda'a, Āmid and Vaspurakan Armenia.



⊕ - Places where the coins with mint-name Armīniyya were produced

a. The Case for Damascus (AH 78)

Regular production of Umayyad post-reform silver dirhams began in the Umayyad Caliphate in AH 79. However, for some mints such as Armīniyya, Adharbayjān, Shaqq al-Taymara and al-Kūfa specimens dated as early as AH 78 exist.⁵ By analyzing the earliest post-reform Armīniyya dirhams dated AH 78 one can observe similarity in style of such dirhams with those prepared elsewhere, particularly in Adharbayjān.⁶ This brought some scholars to conclude that the initial issues of Armīniyya were produced in Damascus.⁷ However, Berj Sabbaghian and Armine Zohrabyan disagreed with the opinion of Iraqi numismatists, arguing that Armīniyya dirhams of AH 78 were minted in Dvin.⁸ Another argument supporting the Dimashq theory was offered by Ashkhen Davtyan who suggested that, by AH 78, Armenia had not yet been conquered by Arabs, a fact that would make the striking of standard coins there rather unlikely. Based on analysis of political circumstances in the province, Davtyan concluded that the earliest coins with the mint-name Armīniyya were struck at Damascus and not Dvin. She also supposed that, aside from economic considerations, such coins could have served as a tool of political propaganda.⁹

However, one needs to be careful with such suggestions. In my opinion, even if aspects of the early trial dirhams suggest a Damascus mint, it is more likely that the mint was responsible for producing the dies and not the coins themselves. There is an opinion that, in the initial phase of 'Abd al-Malik's reform, the coins for peripheral provinces (Armīniyya, Adharbayjān and Kūfa) were not produced in Damascus but at the mints located in the Mashriq. In fact, the reforms conducted by 'Abd al-Malik in AH 72-79 went through several phases and, as a result, ended with the acceptance of a final standard imageless type of epigraphic coinage generated at Shaqq al-Taymara and then accepted by other

provinces throughout the Caliphate.¹⁰ Basing himself on stylistic features of the Umayyad coins struck in Shaqq al-Taymara, Nikolaus Schindel concluded that the prototype for the standard coinage was actually sent to the east from Damascus.¹¹ It is possible that, unlike the samples of Shaqq al-Taymara, the experimental patterns from Armīniyya and Adharbayjān for some reasons may have not been accepted for a wider circulation throughout the Caliphate.¹²



Fig. 1: “Armīniyya”, AR dirham, AH 78 (3.00 g)¹³

Unfortunately, Armenian literary sources tell us little about money and taxes in the Umayyad period. Ghewond tells us that, after the Arab campaigns into Armenia in the 640s AD, the amount of taxes that Armenians had to pay annually to the central authorities in Damascus was equal to 500 dahekans.¹⁴ One “dahekan” was apparently equal to one gold coin (initially equal to one Byzantine solidus).¹⁵ The term “dahekan” appears in the earliest Armenian historical accounts written in the Islamic period.¹⁶ However, in the beginning, the Armenians may have also used Arab-Byzantine and Arab-Sasanian coins along with Umayyad post-reform coins. For instance, during the caliphate of the ‘Abbāsīd al-Manṣūr (AD 754-775) the taxes of Armenia were still counted in silver “zuzus”.¹⁷ These were a monetary unit which took its name from silver ZWZN’ drachms of the Sasanian King Hormizd IV. To the ZWZN’ group of coins the later imitations of Khusru II drachms dated to the period of Muḥammad ibn Marwān’s governorship in Armenia (ca. AH 80) can also be added.¹⁸ There is an opinion that some ZWZN’ coins imitating the Khusru II drachms were issued in Dabīl in AH 73-75.¹⁹ Thus, coins were struck in the province of “Armīniyya” before and after ‘Abd al-Malik’s reform. There is no doubt that all these coins circulated simultaneously in Armenia and adjacent areas along with newly imported Umayyad reformed silver dirhams. In fact, the coinage of Armenia in the early Islamic period had the characteristic features of coinages that were established in other eastern provinces of the Caliphate.²⁰

Michael Bates has already demonstrated that, in the Umayyad period, the mint of Armīniyya was operating when the governor resided in Dvin.²¹ It is probable that all the other Armīniyya coins struck in the Umayyad period were produced in Dabīl, the main city of the caliphal governor in the province.

b. Dabīl as Governmental Residence in the ‘Abbāsīd Period (AH 142 – 256)

Most coins with the mint-name Armīniyya derive from the ‘Abbāsīd period. In their style and design such coins reflected the main features of ‘Abbāsīd coinage throughout the Caliphate: from the pure caliphal issues of al-Manṣūr to the provincial coinage that began during the defragmentation of the Caliphate under Hārūn ar-Rashīd and his sons and then back to the reformed coinage of al-Mu’taṣim by AH 218. It is likely that during this period the Armīniyya coins were struck in the provincial capital, Dvin. The emission of coins bearing the mint-name Dabīl was limited in both quantity and typologically. The list of such coins includes one dinar of AH 241, dirhams of AH 201 and 240, copper fals dated AH 159, 187 and 195.²² Additionally, for the years AH 187, 194 and 241 there is silver coinage from the mint of Armīniyya as well.²³ This does not provide us with the necessary information to determine which city or cities were responsible for coin production in caliphal Armenia. In the ‘Abbāsīd period, Barda’a (Arm. Partav) was the capital of Aluank’ (Arab. Arrān) and the second important governmental residence in the ‘Abbāsīd north. For the period AH 145-220 a regular precise metal coinage from the mints of Barda’a, Arrān and Madīnat Arrān is known.²⁴ Could

the coins of the Armīniyya mint have been produced at Barda’a in the early ‘Abbāsīd period? This would have been contrary to the main conceptual basis of the monetary system that existed in the empire at that time. The mint of Armīniyya being a part of the imperial coinage, the coinage had to be distributed from the capital of the province. It is to be assumed, therefore, that the coins minted between AH 142 and 256 should have represented the activities of the Armīniyya mint located at Dvin, the provincial capital and the main residence of the ‘Abbāsīd governors in Armenia.



Fig. 2: Dabīl, AR dirham, AH 201 (2.98g)²⁵



Fig. 3: Dabīl, AR dirham, AH 240 (2.90 g), unpublished²⁶



Fig. 4: Dabīl, AV dinar, AH 241²⁷

With temporary control of some parts of Armenia in the hands of Sājīd rulers by AD 890 a new series of Armīniyya coins appeared. The Sājīd Muḥammad al-Afshīn seized Dvin from the Bagratids around AD 897 and turned it into his residence. Both Muḥammad al-Afshīn and his son, Dīwdād, both issued silver dirhams in the city with mint name Armīniyya in the late ninth century. By AD 910 the Sājīd Yūsuf ibn Dīwdād had begun the production of gold dinars there bearing the name Armīniyya in the marginal legend. The coinage of Armenia and neighbouring areas under the Sājīds is thoroughly discussed in my PhD dissertation.²⁸

c. The Importance of Āmid (AH 261 – 277)

We have quite a different picture for the late and post-Sāmarrā periods that coincided with the consolidation of Armenian princely houses around the Bagratid princely family, which now claimed some autonomy from Baghdad. During this period, the administrative and fiscal unit of Armīniyya collapsed. This process was caused by Armenian aspirations for independence from central authorities on the one hand and the political crisis breaking out within the ‘Abbāsīd family during the reign of al-Mu’tamid (AD 870-892) on the other. In AD 875 the Caliphate was geographically divided between two rival parties represented by al-Muwaffaq billah, the brother of al-Mu’tamid, and al-Mufawwiḍ alā Allah, the son of the caliph. Thus, al-Muwaffaq received the eastern provinces including Māwarānnahr, while his nephew, al-Mufawwiḍ, got the western provinces as far as Africa. He also retained control over Sāmarrā, the only city that remained under al-Mufawwiḍ’s influence in ‘Iraq.²⁹ The border between the possessions of the two general-governors could have passed through Armenia: it may have trailed along the Tigris until the

Lake Van basin and then, moving upwards towards Dabīl and Barda'a, cut off the eastern provinces of Armenia from the main body of the Armenian Highland.

The southern regions of Armenia and al-Jazira were ruled by a local Arab Shaybānid family that accepted Ja'far al-Mufawwiḍ as their suzerain, a fact reflected in contemporary coinage:



Fig. 5. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 262 (2.77 g)³⁰



Fig. 6. Armīniyya, AR dirham AH 269 (2.94 g)³¹

The descendants of Banū Shaybān had their centre in Āmid.³² Their rise coincided with the reign of the caliph al-Mutawwakil 'alā Allah (AD 847-861). In the sources we find mention of 'Īsā ibn al-Shaykh al-Shaybānī in the context of Bughā's al-Kabīr activities in al-Jazīra dated AH 234. In AH 251 'Īsā was made governor of Palestine and then also took Damascus by force. The caliph replied by sending a new governor to Damascus. In AH 256 the Shaybānids were defeated in a battle near Damascus and temporarily lost their possessions. 'Īsā was forced to flee to Baghdād but in the same year was appointed by al-Mu'tamid as governor of Armenia. 'Īsā remained in that position till his death in AH 269.³³ This same Shaybānid ruler was initially identified on a rare dinar struck at Armīniyya in the same year.

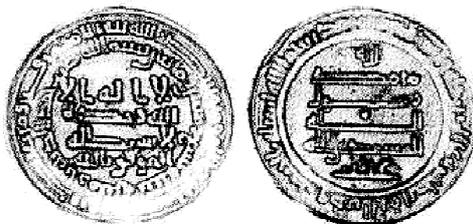


Fig. 7. Armīniyya, AU dinar, AH 269 (3.37 g)³⁴

It is by no means certain, however, how the name placed beneath the caliphal title on this dinar should be read. It is doubtful if it should be read as 'Īsā, the name of the contemporary Shaybānid ruler, because of the way it is engraved. However, even if that name is a crude 'Īsā, we should not connect it with the name of the Shaybānid while the descendants of that Arab tribe accepted the suzerainty of al-Mufawwiḍ 'alā Allah and were, thus, in opposition to al-Muwaffaq who controlled the northern regions of Armenia. It is more likely that the owner of that name was one of the officials who served al-Muwaffaq.

Shaybānid rule in Mesopotamia and Armenia was interrupted in AH 266-267 when 'Īsā ibn al-Shaykh's political rival, a local ruler named Ishāq ibn Kundāj, deprived him of control over his lands. Moreover, in AH 266 Ishāq attacked the lord of Mawṣil, Ishāq ibn Ayyūb, and drove him as far as Niṣībīn, which soon fell too. Ishāq ibn Ayyūb appealed for help to 'Īsā ibn Shaykh and his ally of the local Zuraric dynasty, Abū al-Mu'izz ibn Mūsā, the lord of Arzan, and they made a united front against Ishāq ibn Kundāj. This political turbulence was welcomed by the caliph, who immediately appointed Ishāq ibn Kundāj as the new governor of

Mawṣil, Diyār Rabī' and Armenia in the same year. In Ramaḍān of AH 267 Ishāq ibn Kundāj defeated 'Īsā ibn al-Shaykh and his allies, the lords of Arzan and Mawṣil, and chased them as far as Niṣībīn and then Āmid. 'Īsā ibn al-Shaykh and other local warlords had to pay 200,000 dinars to Ishāq in order to be confirmed in their possessions.³⁵

On the reverse of a dirham of Armīniyya dated AH 269 there is a mark resembling the Arabic letter *qāf* (ق). Some coins struck at Mawṣil in AH 263³⁶ and 267³⁷ have the initials of Ishāq ibn Kundāj, the governor of al-Jazīra on behalf of al-Mufawwiḍ, in the form of ح or سح. One can tentatively suggest that the letter ق was another form of abbreviation, using the final character, of the name Ishāq.

'Īsā ibn al-Shaykh was succeeded by his son, Aḥmad, who defeated the Armenian King Smbat I (AD 891-914) in the battle of Hols in AD 895/6.³⁸ Aḥmad initiated an emission of coins in the name of al-Mufawwiḍ but this time included his own name on both sides of coin. Such coins with the mint-name Armīniyya are known for AH 276 and 277 only.



Fig. 8. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 276 (2.87 g)³⁹



Fig. 9. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 277 (3.29 g)⁴⁰

c. Barda'a for Dabīl?

At the same time, caliphal officials in the north struck coins in the name of the caliph's brother, al-Muwaffaq, thus placing themselves against the faction of al-Mu'tamid's son, Ja'far. Such coins are known so far for the years AH 265, 267, 269, 273, 276 and 277. An important peculiarity of this coinage is the generally crude style of inscriptions, sometimes with errors and missing letters in the legends. All these coins were presumably struck at Dvin. According to sources, when the Bagratid Smbat became King of Armenia (AD 891) his first step was to achieve the submission of Dvin which, at that time, was governed by the brothers Muḥammad and Umayya,⁴¹ persons otherwise unknown historically. These were apparently officials of al-Muwaffaq billah, who were able to gain temporary independence from the central authorities after their patron died in June AD 891.



Fig. 10. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 265 (3.25 g)⁴²



Fig. 11. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 267 (2, 96 g)⁴³



Fig. 12. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 269 (4.06 g)⁴⁴



Fig. 13. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 273 (3.57 g)⁴⁵



Fig. 14. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 276⁴⁶

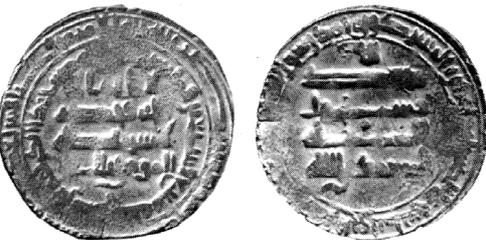


Fig. 15. Armīniyya, AR dirham, AH 277 (3.20 g)⁴⁷

After the Bagratid King Smbat I absorbed Dvin in AD 892/3 the caliphal coins could no longer be produced in the city. As a result, the caliphal mint was moved from Dvin to neighbouring Partav, an Armenian name for Barda'a, and another significant city in the "Armīniyya" province, which was still under 'Abbāsīd control in AD 891. Barda'a was producing coins in the name of al-Muwaffaq and we know such issues for AH 267 and 277.⁴⁸ However, for the year AH 277 we also have quite amazing coins representing a type where the name of the province "Armīniyya" is engraved in the marginal inscription and "Barda'a" in the last line of the reverse field to show where exactly the coin was produced.



Fig. 16. Armīniyya-Barda'a, AR dirham, AH 277 (3.11 g)⁴⁹

Thus, at the end of the ninth century there were two different issues of coins that were controlled by two different political factions. Coins struck in the name of al-Muwaffaq billah were struck at Dabīl and then Barda'a while others carrying the name of al-Mufawwid were apparently issued at Āmid or elsewhere in southern Armenia (Aldznik'), but not in Dabīl, which initially belonged to al-Muwaffaq and was absorbed by the Bagratids only in AH 277. In fact, caliphal coins were struck in Armenia even after the Bagratid Ashot I (AD 884/5-890/1) was crowned King of Armenia. This backs up some evidence in the literary sources about the semi-independent status of the Armenian Bagratids in the late ninth century.⁵⁰ It is also worth noting that, in the 'Abbāsīd period, the activities of the caliphal mint in Barda'a could somehow be connected with the output of gold, silver and copper mines located in the mountains of Aluank'.⁵¹

d. Indications for Vaspurakan Armenia

After the fall of the Sājīd dynasty, some parts of Armenia and adjacent territories were seized by a former Sājīd military commander named Daysam ibn Ibrāhīm. In the AD 950s the northern parts of Armenia with its centre in Dvin became a point of contention between the Shaddādīd, Armenian and Sallārīd rulers. The Sallārīds were more successful in seizing Dvin. In the list of tributaries by Ibn Hauqal dated AH 344/ AD 955 the Bagratid king is also mentioned.⁵² After the death of the Sallārīd al-Marzbān in AH 346, Dvin may have remained under Armenian administration but continued to pay annual tribute to the Sallārīds. From the period of Sallārīd domination we have a rare gold dinar struck in the names of the Sallārīd Ibrāhīm ibn al-Marzbān (citing his *kunya* Abu Ishaq) and the Fātimīd caliph, al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allah (AD 953-975), at Armīniyya in AH 353. This mysterious dinar could not have been struck either at Dabīl or Barda'a since both cities were out of Ibrāhīm's control at the beginning of the AH 350s. From AD 960 onwards the Sallārīd state was involved in an internecine struggle that broke out between Ibrāhīm ibn al-Marzbān and his paternal uncle, Wahsūdān. After some unsuccessful attempts to subdue his uncle, Ibrāhīm ultimately lost Dabīl and Barda'a to Wahsūdān and his son, Ismā'īl. As a result, Ibrāhīm was forced to flee to Vaspurakan Armenia, to his friend and ally, the Arçrunid King Derenik (AD 943-958)⁵³. This historical account is an indirect indication that the aforementioned coin could have been struck in Vaspurakan Armenia where Ibrāhīm was hiding between AH 349 and 354.



Fig. 17. Armīniyya, AU dinar, AH 353, (3.77 g)⁵⁴

The escape of the Sallārīd prince to Vaspurakan was not a sporadic event. In the tenth century AD, the Arçrunid Kingdom of Vaspurakan was not only the most powerful but also the most politically stable Armenian state. The founder of the dynasty and the first king of Vaspurakan, Gagik (AD 908-943), maintained close relations with the Muslim rulers who sought the assistance of Gagik and his descendants in their political intrigues against the Bagratid kings and Byzantine Empire. The Arçrunids also

provided the local Muslim rulers the necessary resources for their military purposes. Such close relations are observed in the beginning of the tenth century when Gagik, receiving a crown from the Sājīd ruler, became a faithful ally of Yūsuf ibn Dīwdād. Furthermore, the sons of Gagik were also able to establish warm relations with the former Sājīd commander, Daysam ibn Ibrāhīm, who seized Adharbayjān and Armenia for a while. The same applied to the Arcrunids in their relations with the Sallārids. Also, the Shaddādid Muḥammad found refuge with the Vaspurakan kings when he needed assistance in his struggle against his political opponents. The Sallārid Ibrāhīm found shelter in Vaspurakan every time he escaped from his political rivals.⁵⁵ Such flexible external politics operated by the Arcrunids provided, of course, both political and economical prosperity in Vaspurakan. The borders of the Vaspurakan kingdom at this period were considerably expanded and reached as far as Naxčawan and Gołtn in the north, while, in the west, Vaspurakan bordered on the Byzantine Empire. The stability of the political background of the state promoted the development of the spiritual life of the Armenians. For instance, one of the most renowned churches of that period called Alt'amar (built in AD 915-921) and many others that appeared later (the monastery of Varag, founded in AD 1021) were built by King Gagik and his successors during that profitable time.⁵⁶

Conclusions.

There are a few places where the coins bearing the mint-place Armīniyya were struck during the first four centuries of Islam. There is an opinion that the earliest Umayyad dirhams (or at least their dies) dated AH 78 were produced in Damascus, though we do not have proper evidence for this statement. For the early 'Abbāsīd and then the "Sāmarrā" period (AH 142-256) the coins with the mint-name Armīniyya were minted in Dvin (Dabīl), the capital of the province of "Armīniyya" and the main residence of the 'Abbāsīd governors in the north. For some forty years, both gold and silver Sājīd coins were struck in Dvin, too. However, in the late ninth century (AH 277/ AD 890-1), during the reign of the Bagratid Ashot I in Armenia, the Armīniyya coins were struck at Dabīl, Barda'a and Āmid (or elsewhere in Aldznik'?) simultaneously. This was a result of political turbulence within the 'Abbāsīd family as well as the gradual disintegration of the administrative and fiscal unit of Armīniyya resulting from the rise of the Bagratids in Armenia. In the second half of the tenth century, i.e. during the Sallārid period, the coins were struck somewhere in Vaspurakan Armenia (on Alt'amar Island or in the fortress of Daroyink'?), whose rulers were allies of Muslim lords of Adharbayjān who had temporarily seized parts of Armenia.

Finally, the numismatic evidence allows us to conclude that the collapse of the province of "Armīniyya" took place after AH 261/ AD 875 when the entire Caliphate was divided between the rival factions of al-Muwaffaq and al-Mufawwiḍ. A parallel existence of three Armīniyya mints located in Dabīl, Barda'a and Āmid (?) in AH 276-277 marked the end of the caliphal province of "Armīniyya" as one administrative and fiscal unit. Undoubtedly, the evidence of contemporary hoards containing Armīniyya coins of the late 'Abbāsīd period would definitely help us in clarifying the phenomenon, but we do not have any, while the inventory of coin hoards published on the basis of the collection of the State History Museum of Armenia seems rather incomplete.

Endnotes

- ¹ I would like to thank Mr. Levon Vrtanesyan (USA) for editing my English.
- ² Ter-Ghewondian 1976, 20-21.
- ³ Le Strange 1966, 182.
- ⁴ Vasmer 1927, 37; Lowick 1977, 22.
- ⁵ Klat 2002, 295.
- ⁶ Broome 1991, 3-4.
- ⁷ Sabbaghian 1986, 49; Zohrabyan 2003, 87.
- ⁸ al-Bakri 1974.
- ⁹ Davtyan 2009, 75-77.
- ¹⁰ Treadwell 2009, 374-375.
- ¹¹ Schindel 2003, 64.

- ¹² Broome 1991, 4.
- ¹³ Klat 2002, 45.
- ¹⁴ Ghewond 1982, 25.
- ¹⁵ Manandian 1930, 22-24.
- ¹⁶ Sebeos 1939, 88.
- ¹⁷ Ghewond 1982, 105.
- ¹⁸ Nikitin 1993; Sica I, no. 494.
- ¹⁹ Sears 2003, 77-110.
- ²⁰ Ilich 2008, 167-179.
- ²¹ Bates 1989, 89-111.
- ²² Vardanyan 2011, 252; Vardanyan 2012, 255a, 251.
- ²³ Vardanyan 2011, 59-60, 74, 88.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 111-181.
- ²⁵ Baldwin's Islamic Coin London 10, 20 July, 2005, lot 82.
- ²⁶ Zeno, no. 125557.
- ²⁷ ANS, no. 1968.216.1 (illustrated coin); Münzen und Medaillen AG (Basel) 69, 1986, Nr. 80 (3.76 g).
- ²⁸ Vardanyan 2013.
- ²⁹ Several hundred coins struck during the reign of al-Mu'tamid between AH 261 and 277 were analysed. During the period in 'Iraq the coins in the name of al-Muwaffaq billah were produced in Madīnat al-Salām, Baṣra, Kūfa, Wāsiṭ and al-Muwaffaqiyya. The only mint that issued coins in the name of al-Mufawwiḍ was Sāmarrā.
- ³⁰ Tübingen, inv. Nr. 28-11-2.
- ³¹ Hermitage OH-B-M-2316 (illustrated coin); Czechow hoard 595 (3.10 g).
- ³² Bianquis 1997, 392.
- ³³ Canard 1978, 88-90.
- ³⁴ Sotheby's 23-24 April 1998, lot 218.
- ³⁵ Tabari 1987, 7, 50.
- ³⁶ Baldwin's Islamic Coin London 21, 17 July 2012, lot 267 (3,35 g).
- ³⁷ BNF = Lavoix 1887, 1038.
- ³⁸ Vardanyan 2013, 27.
- ³⁹ Buseyra hoard (illustrated coin); Lemberg coll. (4.69 g) (Odessa).
- ⁴⁰ Tübingen, inv. Nr. 91-16-33.
- ⁴¹ Draskhanakertsi 1912, 160-161.
- ⁴² Akopyan coll. (Moscow), unpublished.
- ⁴³ Leimus 2007, 603 (illustrated coin); Tübingen 270H6 (3.11 g).
- ⁴⁴ Reva coll. (Novosibirsk).
- ⁴⁵ Christianian coll. (USA) (illustrated coin); Private Syrian coll. (4.06 g).
- ⁴⁶ Baldwin's Islamic Coin London 21, 17 July 1999, lot 661 (illustrated coin); Tübingen, inv. Nr. 99-30-19 (2.81 g); Leimus 2007, 605 (2.18 g).
- ⁴⁷ Leimus 2007, 604; D. Markov's Mail Bids 10, 23 October 2001, lot 411.
- ⁴⁸ Vardanyan 2011, 182-184.
- ⁴⁹ Baldwin's Islamic Coin London 10, 20 July 2005, lot 101 (illustrated coin); Tübingen, inv. Nr. A12A2 (3.39 g); SPINK (Zurich) 27, 1 June 1988, Nr. 344 (2.95 g); ZENO, no. 78111 (2.21); ZENO, no. 23512.
- ⁵⁰ According to some Islamic and also Armenian sources, Armenians had to pay annual *Sakk* and *Begar* (kinds of taxes) to the central authorities (Draskhanakertsi 1912, 161) even after Ashot I established the Bagratid Kingdom in AD 884/5. The control of tax collecting and other tributes in Armenia was entrusted to *vostikans* (governors) who were from time to time appointed from Baghdad. During the entire first half of the tenth century, the function of *vostikans* in Armenia was in the hands of Turkic Sājīds and then Daylamite Sallārids (for instance, see the list of Ibn Hauqal dated AH 344 published by Minorsky in 1953).
- ⁵¹ Kalankatvatsi 1983, 9.
- ⁵² Minorsky 1953, 504-529.
- ⁵³ Miskawayh II, 195.
- ⁵⁴ Morton & Eden 27, 11-13 June, 2007, lot 296.
- ⁵⁵ Vardanyan 2013, 123.
- ⁵⁶ Ter-Nersessian 1947, 66.

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A REMARKABLE DINAR OF TIMUR

By F. Mosanef (Tehran) & M.T.Saffar (Mashhad)

According to numismatic references¹, although many different types of silver dirhams were struck for Timur, only one type of fractional gold dinar has so far been reported. In this article we publish a new example of a gold dinar.²



Fig. 1

Obv.

لا إله إلا الله
في شهر
محمد

سنة ست و ثمانين وسبع مائه (سبع مائه)

رسول الله

Margin:

ابوبكر الصديق، عمر الفاروق، عثمان ذوالنورين، علي المرتضى

Rev.

ضرب
اصفهان

Margin:

السلطان الاعظم سيور غتمش امير تيمور كوركان خلد الله ملكه

Weight: 4.29 g; diameter: 25 mm

This coin is a very important historical and numismatic document because it was struck in Isfahan 3 years before Timur's first incursion into Muzaffarid territory and even 2 years before the first known coins were struck in his name in Jibal and Fars.

This remarkable dinar was struck in Isfahan in AH 786, during the rule of Shah Yahya in this city.

Nusrat al-Din Shah Yahya³ was born in Muharram of AH 744. His father, Shah Muzaffar, was the son of the Muzaffarid Sultan Muhammad b. al-Muzaffar (AH 736-759).

Shah Yahya lost his father when he was 10 years old, but, despite this, he became the favorite of his grandfather, Sultan Muhammad, during the conquest of Tabriz in AH 759, when his uncles, Shah Shuja' and Shah Mahmud, after three days' pursuit, failed to arrest Akhi Juq (The last Chohanid Amir and ruler of Azerbaijan). Sultan Muhammad after humiliating his sons and showing his gratitude for Shah Yahya's bravery, ordered the victory over Akhi Juq and the conquest of Azerbaijan to be dedicated to his grandson, Shah Yahya.

This kind of attention to Shah Yahya caused Shah Shuja' and Shah Mahmud to be worried about the possibility that Yahya might be chosen as their father's heir. They, therefore, conspired against Sultan Muhammad, arrested him and then ordered him to be blinded.

Shah Shuja' ordered Shah Yahya to be arrested and sent him to be imprisoned in Ghuhanduz Castle near Shiraz. He awarded the governorship of Isfahan and Jibal to Shah Mahmud, and Sultan Ahmad became the governor of Kirman.

After some time, Shah Yahya, with help of some loyal guards, managed to take control of Ghuhanduz Castle. An attempt by Shah Shuja' to besiege the castle proved unsuccessful and, in due course, Shuja' appointed Yahya governor of Yazd in return for his pledge of loyalty.

It was not long, however, before Yahya started to disobey Shuja'. This resulted in Shuja' sending an army to Yazd to bring him to heel. Yahya wrote a letter to his uncle, asking for mercy and promising to be loyal to him. This promise turned out to be short-lived as, during the civil war between Shuja' and Mahmud in AH 765, Yahya allied himself with Mahmud. Moreover, when Pahlewan Asad rebelled in Kirman, Yahya sent some troops to help him against his uncle.

In due course, Shuja' defeated Mahmud and various of his allies, and sent an army under the command of Shah Mansur to punish Yahya. This time, Yahya resorted to another trick: he sent his mother to Mansur. She persuaded Mansur to avoid attacking his brother whereupon the former dismissed his troops and returned to Shiraz. Such was Yahya's bad faith that he did not even let Mansur enter Yazd.

In AH 780 Shah Shuja' moved his troops to Yazd to suppress his nephew. Shah Yahya once again begged his uncle for mercy, he apologizing and swearing to be loyal to him. Shuja' accept his apology and returned to Shiraz.

While the Muzaffarid princes were involved in civil war and conflict with the Jalayrids, a new power had arisen in Transoxiana. Amir Timur who had captured Transoxiana, extended his territory to Khurasan and the northern part of Iran, but he did not enter Muzaffarid territory.

Shah Shuja', in fear of being attacked by Timur, sought to maintain good relations with him. He was worried that, after his death, the other Muzaffarid princes would not recognise his son, Zayn al-'Abidin (AH 786-793) as his successor. He, therefore, wrote a will and sent it to Timur, asking him to support and assist Zayn al-'Abidin in his rule.

Shah Shuja' passed away on the 22nd of Sha'ban AH 786 and his son succeeded him. As he had predicted, his territory once again became involved in civil war.

Shah Yahya took control of Isfahan in AH 786 immediately after the death of his uncle. The people of Isfahan welcomed him warmly. He then moved his army towards Shiraz. There, after some negotiations, he signed a peace treaty with Zayn al-'Abidin, after which Yahya returned to Isfahan. This time, however, the people of Isfahan, instead of welcoming him back as before, closed the gates of the city and did not let him enter. So Yahya returned to Yazd.

Isfahan allied itself to Zayn al-'Abidin, who sent Muzaffar Kashi to be its governor.

In AH 788 when Timur was in Hamadan, he wrote a letter to Zayn al-'Abidin asking him to come to Hamadan.

Zayn al-'Abidin did not go to him nor did he let Timur's messengers go back. This behavior resulted in Timur moving his troops to Muzaffarid territory despite Zayn al-'Abidin striking coins in Timur's name.

The Governor of Isfahan pleaded the allegiance of the city to Timur peacefully. Timur sent some envoys to Isfahan to gather the tax, but because of the envoys' humiliating behaviour, the people attacked and killed them all.

Timur, outraged by what had happened to his envoys, ordered a massacre of the people of Isfahan. His soldiers mass murdered more than 70,000 people.

Shah Yahya and Sultan Ahmad joined Timur and expressed their loyalty to him. Zayn al-'Abidin left Shiraz and withdrew to

Khuzistan. Shah Mansur welcomed his cousin, but, after a short time, arrested him.

Timur who had conquered Muzaffarid territory in AH 789, gave Shiraz, Fars and Jibal to Shah Yahya as reward for his loyalty to him. Yahya thus became a Muzaffarid puppet king, and Timur returned to Transoxiana.

Soon after Timur left the Muzaffarid lands, a new civil war between the Muzaffarid princes started. Shah Mansur attacked Shiraz, Shah Yahya left Shiraz and made his way to Yazd, while keeping Sirjan and Abarqu under his control.

Shah Mansur's attacks on other princes were not successful. Shah Yahya tried not to get involved too much in subsequent internal conflicts.

In AH 795, Timur invaded a second time. Yahya, who had remained loyal to Timur, joined him. Shah Mansur, however, was killed in battle.

This time Timur gave the governorship of the Muzaffarid territory to his son, Umar Shaykh. He was worried about how the Muzaffarid princes would behave once he left them. Because of this he decided to execute all the Muzaffarid princes that he could find. Thirty-seven Muzaffarid princes, including Shah Yahya and his two sons, were executed in AH 795 in Mahyar in the suburb of Qumshe near Isfahan. Shah Yahya's body was taken to Yazd and buried there.

The gold dinar published in this article is proof that Shah Yahya struck coins in the name of Timur in exchange for the latter's political and military assistance. It can be mentioned that Shah Mahmud did something similar when he struck coins in the name of the Jalayrid ruler in exchange for the latter's support in his conflict with Shah Shuja'.

As we have mentioned, this coin was struck three years before Timur's first invasion of Muzaffarid territory and two years before the first reported date for Timur's coinage in Muzaffarid territories.

In conclusion, it would seem that, after the death of Shah Shuja', when Shah Yahya took control of Isfahan, in order to defeat his other Muzaffarid rivals, he established a very close relationship with Timur. To show him his loyalty he had coins struck in Timur's name. This action clearly did not please the people of Isfahan and so they did not let him re-enter the city after his peace agreement with Zayn al-'Abidin.

It appears that Zayn al-'Abidin was aware of the special relationship between Shah Yahya and Timur, and was, thus, suspicious of Timur's intentions towards him. That will have been why he did not accept Timur's invitation to come to Hamadan⁴.

Notes

¹ Album St. *Checklist of Islamic Coins*. Santa Rosa (CA), 2011, p. 318. An example of a gold dinar of Timur, struck in Baghdad and weighing 4.61g was included in Spink's auction of 26 March 2014 (lot 316). The auction house may have been overly cautious in describing it as a "fantasy dinar".

² From a private collection (Mashhad)

³ General sources on the history of Muzaffarid and Shah Yahya are as follows: Mahmud Katbi, *Tarikhe Ale Muzaffar*, Tehran, 1364; Khuand Mir, *Tarikhe Habib al-Siyar*, Vol III, Tehran, 1362; Hafiz Abru, *Zubdat Al-Tavarikh*, Vols I & II, Tehran, 1380; Muin al-din ibn Jalal al-din Muhammad Mualem e Yazdi, Tehran, 1326; Kamal al-din 'Abd al-Razagh Samarghandi, *Matla u Al-Sadeyn va Majmau al-Bahrayn*, vol I, Tehran, 1383; Dr Husayn Ghuli Sutudeh, *Tarikhe Ale Muzaffar*, Tehran, 1385; Muhammad ibn Khavand Shah e Balkhi, *Ruzat al-safa*, Vol IV & VI.

⁴ We would like to express our thanks to the Editor for his help in editing this article and to Stephen Lloyd for his similar help with our article, "An Umayyad dirham of Tokharistan" published in JONS 217.

SELEUCID COINAGE OF SAMARQAND?

By Aleksandr Naymark (Hofstra University)

The history of the question

As far as I know, the first scholar to suggest the existence of a Seleucid mint in Sogdiana was V.M. Masson. Discussing the Samarqand line of Antiochus imitations, as well as the related coinages of “Samarqand Archer” and Hyrcodes, he wrote: “It is possible, that these coins go back to the still unknown coinage of Antiochus I in Soghd. Numismatic data allows one to believe that the beginning of independent Sogdian coinage dates from the first half of the 3rd century BC, from the short period when Sogdiana constituted a part of the Seleucid Empire” (Masson 1955, p. 43). Two decades later G.A. Koshelenko suggested that the mint of the first Seleucid kings in Soghd could be situated in the area of Khodjand (Koshelenko 1979, p. 157-158). This later statement provoked a negative response from E.V. Zeimal’ who pointed out that the territories situated to the north of Turkestan mountain range reveal no traces of ancient monetary circulation (Zeimal’ 1983, 282, footnote 2). Zeimal’ also remarked that there were no sufficient foundations to support Masson’s suggestion about a Seleucid mint anywhere in Sogdiana. Indeed, the types of Antiochus’ coins with horse’s head (the prototypes for Sogdian imitations) had already been attributed to Bactria on the basis of the delta monogram by E.T. Newell (1938, p. 269) and by the 1980s the relatively massive finds of coins with this monogram in Bactria had left no doubt as to the correctness of this localization. Furthermore, no other types that could represent local Seleucid coinage had turned up among the finds of Hellenistic coins in Sogdiana by the 1980s. It should be noted that Zeimal’s views were based on the thorough examination of all available evidence – he critically assessed all kinds of information on old finds in scholarly and other literature and created an exhaustive list of physically available coins in local museums and private collections (Zeimal’ 1983a: 27-57; Zeimal’ 1983b). With the lack of evidence testifying to the existence of a Seleucid mint in Sogdiana, the community of Central Asian numismatists showed no further interest in the question, even though there were attempts to employ numismatic data in the reconstructions of the Seleucid period of local history, for example by Lerner (1999).

Stray finds of Hellenistic silver coins in Sogdiana

During the three decades that have passed since the time of Zeimal’s publication, the ongoing registration of Hellenistic coins in Sogdiana has greatly expanded the list of finds (Rtveladze & Niyazova, 1984; Rtveladze, 1984; Bernard, 1985; Kurbanov & Niyazova, 1989; Kurbanov, 1997; Baratova, 2000a; Baratova, 2000b; Biriukov, 2001; Abdullaev, 2001; Rtveladze, 2002a; Rtveladze, 2002b; Abdullaev Franceschini & Raimkulov, 2004; Naymark, 2005; Abdullaev, 2006; Naymark, 2008; Abdullaev & Berdimuradov, 2010; Atakhodzhaev, 2005; Naymark, Yakovlev, 2011a; Biriukov, 2011; Naymark & Yakovlev, 2011b; Atakhodzhaev, 2013). Combined with the systematic “cleaning” of incorrect and doubtful data in the the database, most of which had been derived by different 20th century scholars from the 19th and early 20th century literature (Naymark, 2005), this continuing work by different members of the scholarly community has produced a constantly expanding list of finds of Hellenistic coins from the territory of Sogdiana.

The latest published version of this list included 54 coins (Atakhodzhaev, 2013). Yet just as this last inventory was published, four new specimens were registered: 2 drachms of Alexander were found in the area of Chim-Kurgan reservoir in Southern Soghd (Belyaev & Naymark, forthcoming), one original tetradrachm of Euthydemus turned out to be among the imitations of Euthydemus’ tetradrachms in the Alexander Burns’ collection acquired in Bukhara, in the British Museum, and one tetradrachm of Euthydemus found in the vicinity of Varakhsha was placed on Zeno.ru #20180. It also seems necessary to “restore” to the list two coins attributed by M.E. Masson, which had been included earlier (Naymark 2005), but were omitted by Atakhodzhaev. The first one

is a Seleucid chalkos, possibly of Antiochus I, which, according to Michael Masson, was found on the site of Kurgan-tepe in the Samarqand province (Rtveladze, 2002b: p. 164).¹ The second is the copper of Euthydemus found in 1928, during the digging of a grave on the cemetery situated on Afrasiab, the site of ancient Samarqand (Masson, 1950: 158; Masson, 1972: 25).² With these six coins added the list of stray finds is as follows:

1. Hekatomn – 1 diobol;
2. Alexander III – 1 tetradrachm, 3 drachms, 1 chalkos;
3. Pseudo-Athenian coins (Diadochi or early Seleucids) – 2 silver and 1 copper;
4. Seleucids are represented by 34 coins, 30 of them -- copper: Seleucos I – 1 tetradrachm, 2 drachms, and 2 chalki; Antiochus I – 1 tetradrachm, 15 chalki; Antiochus II (including coins of Diodotus with the name of Antiochus) – 7 chalki; Chalkos attributed to Antiochus (published without detailed description) - 1; New type with the name of Antiochus – 5 chalki (for attribution see below in this article);
5. Greeks of Bactria are represented by 15 coins, 5 of them copper, 4 of the coppers are Diodotid: Diodotus I/II – 3 chalki and 1 coin of silver type (diobolus - ?), but described as copper; Euthydemus – 2 tetradrachms and 1 chalkos; Demetrios – 1 tetradrachm and 2 obols; Antimachos – 1 tetradrachm; Eucratides I – 1 obol; Eucratides II – 1 tetradrachm; Heliocles – 2 tetradrachms;

Tokhmach-tepe hoard of Greco-Bactrian

Of the two hoards of Greco-Bactrian coins recorded in the territory of Sogdia, the Tokhmach tepe one, found in 1983 in the Bukharan oasis, is the better recorded. The jar containing the hoard was noticed by two school teachers in the soil, which builders of an irrigation canal were placing in its bed. The soil containing the find came from the nearby archaeological mound of Tokhmach-Tepe. Originally the teachers passed 50 specimens from the find to the Bukharan Museum. The hoard was published by Rtveladze (Rtveladze & Niyazova, 1984: 54-58; Rtveladze, 1984: 63-66; Rtveladze, 2002a: 86-94). Later the finders passed to the museum eight more specimens, which provided Kurbanov with an opportunity to issue a more complete publication of this hoard (Kurbanov & Niyazova, 1989) and for better photographs see Kurbanov (in Kalter & Pawaloy, 1997: 39-40; see also Kurbanov, 2001)³. As far as it is presently known, the hoard consisted of 58 coins: four tetradrachms of Diodotus with the name of Antiochus II; one tetradrachm of Diodotus struck in his own name; fifty-one tetradrachms of Euthydemus; and two commemorative tetradrachms of Agathocles.

The composition of the Tokhmach-Tepe hoard is strikingly similar to the composition of two hoards of Greco-Bactrian silver from Ai-Khanum (Petitot-Biehler, 1975: 23-57, Pls. I-VI; Holt, 1981: 9 -10, 12-17). If we omit the coins of early Hellenistic rulers that were present only in the hoards from Ai-Khanum, the composition of all three can be conveniently compared in a table:

Table I: Compositions of Ai-Khanum hoards III and IV and the hoard from Tokhmach-Tepe

| The name of the king | Ai-Khanum hoard III | Ai-Khanum hoard IV | Tokhmach-Tepe Hoard |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Diodotus I in Antiochus’ name | 7 | 7 | 4 |
| Diodotus | 1 | | |
| Diodotus I in his own name | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Diodotus II | | 1 | |
| Euthydemus I | 27 | 81 | 51 |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|----|---|
| Demetrius | 3 | 8 | |
| Euthydemus II | 1 | 2 | |
| Antimachus I | 2 | 2 | |
| Agathocles | 3 | 15 | 2 |

There are two different interpretations of the hoard from Tokhmach tepe. According to Rtveldadze (Rtveldadze and Niazova, 1984: 54-8; Rtveldadze, 1984: 63-66; Rtveldadze, 2002a: 95) and Bernard (1985: 166) this hoard reflects the local circulation of Greco-Bactrian coins in the Bukharan oasis. Zeimal' took the opposite point of view, arguing that since the hoard consists of silver coins, it is likely to be a deposit of foreign silver (Zeimal', 1990: 16). The composition of the Tokhmach-tepe hoard certainly supports Zeimal's position. The aforementioned similarity with the hoards found at Ai-Khanum could mean either (1) that the monetary mass circulating in the Bukharan oasis around the time of Agathocles was exactly the same as the one in Ai Khanum, which is very hard to believe since practically no Hellenistic copper coins following the revolt of Euthydemus and very few silver coins of the 2nd century BC are found in Sogdiana, or (2) that the coins of this hoard were brought from North-East Bactria together, and were deposited without being separated. The latter interpretation is certainly much more plausible. We can only guess how these coins arrived in the Bukharan oasis -- they could have been brought by trade or by war, in a merchant's trunk or as a ransom.

Kitab hoard

The second Sogdian hoard of Greco-Bactrian coins was said to be found in 1906 near Kitab, the old site of the pre-Islamic capital of Kesh principality in the Kashka Darya valley. The information about it comes from two short descriptions by M.E. Masson, who had a chance to examine about a hundred specimens from this find left in the hands of the widow of Shakir'ants, a Samarqand jeweler and coin dealer. Masson also passed to us some hearsay information about the origin of the hoard evidently obtained from other sources (Masson, 1926: 272; Masson, 1928: 284)⁴. Most of the coins in the hoard were obols, drachms and tetradrachms of Eucratides belonging to the types with helmeted and diademed king. Originally there was also a tetradrachm of Eucratides with the portraits of Heliocles and Laodica, which later ended up in the Berlin Coin Room. As for other Greco-Bactrian kings, the coinage of Demetrius was represented by several obols and drachms, and that of Antimachus I by two coins (obols or drachms or one of each). While nothing is known about the further destiny of the coins once owned by Shakir'ants, it is possible that some holdings in the museums and published coins can be traced back to this hoard. For example, Zeimal' has suggested that the very representative sample of coins of Eucratides in the Tashkent and Samarqand museums derives from this find (Zeimal' 1983b, 46). Zeimal' also believed that some of the Eucratides coins in the collection of Sotiriadis, which was gathered in Samarqand prior to 1912 (republished in Bernard, 1985: 137-148), also come from this hoard (Zeimal', 1983b: 46). Paul Bernard expressed an even firmer opinion in regard to this matter: "La composition de ce trésor, la date de sa découverte (1906), la proximité de Kitab par rapport à Samarqand, le fait enfin qu'il fut dispersé dans le commerce amènent à se demander si la collection Sotiriadis ne proviendrait pas, pour l'essentiel, de cette trouvaille" (Bernard, 1985: 140).

Four obols of Antimachos Theos in the collection of B.N. Kastal'sky, which were said to have been found near Shahrizabs (Kastal'sky, 1940: 347)⁵, could constitute a separate microhoard, but could also have come from the Kitab find. Shahrizabs, the city and the administrative centre of the area, was situated at a distance of some 10 km from the smaller settlement of Kitab. One may add two more considerations to the argumentation for the Kitab origin of these coins: (1) the rarity of such finds in Sogdiana and (2) the presence of Antimachos coins in the Kitab hoard. It should be stressed here, however, that the alternative interpretations of these four coins (as a part of the Kitab hoard or as a separate, third hoard of Greco-Bactrian coins in Sogdian soil) would not affect our conclusion concerning the political history of Sogdiana.

Unlike the Tokhmach-tepe hoard, which consists exclusively of tetradrachms, the Kitab one includes different denominations. It appears to be a merchant's treasure taken directly from the monetary circulation of neighbouring Bactria and brought to Sogdiana as weight silver.

Coins and political history of Sogdiana in the 4th - 2nd century BC

Let us now see what the composition of finds can tell us about the political history of Sogdiana. As various copper denominations constitute the majority of Seleucid and Diodotid coins in our sample, we can assume that the Seleucids controlled Sogdiana and that Diodotus inherited this land when he seceded from the Seleucid Empire.

The latest copper specimen in the list belongs to the reign of Euthydemus, yet it is highly unlikely that this king retained control of Sogdiana. Euthydemid copper is the most numerous among the coins of Greco-Bactrian kings in all systematically published collections from Bactrian sites: Ay-Khanum (Bernard, 1985), Takht-i Sangin (Zeimal', 1997; Zeimal' 2000, see also additions to the list by I.R. Pichikian and B.A. Litvinsky on p. 404), and Kampyr-tepa (Rtveldadze and Gorin 2011). Given that the composition of Seleucid and Diodotid coin finds in Sogdiana is generally similar to that of Bactria, we could expect an abundance of Euthydemid copper among our sample. Since this is not the case, we should probably consider the single specimen in our Sogdian sample just as a random occurrence, at least for now, until we have more data.

The suggested termination of Greek control in the time of Euthydemus based on copper coins finds confirmation in the low number of stray finds of silver coins of Euthydemus. Judging from the composition of Greco-Bactrian coins in large museum collections, the coinage of Euthydemus was the second in volume in the entire history of Greco-Bactrian minting, being inferior only to that of Eucratides. Meanwhile, in Soghd, Euthydemid silver is currently represented only by two stray finds.

In other words, the new materials perfectly support the earlier conclusion formulated on the basis of a much smaller sample (Naymark, 2008: 56; Naymark and Yakovlev 2011b: 42) that Greek power in Sogdiana collapsed around the time of the revolt/plot of Euthydemus. With the currently available numismatic material, however, the date is still somewhat "blurry" – the loss of Sogdiana could have happened prior, at the time, or very soon after the "dynastic transition".

Seleucid coins of unknown type from the Samarqand area

As already mentioned above, the most recent addition to the list of Hellenistic coins found in Sogdiana was made by Anvar Atakhodzhaev, who had been systematically registering finds of Hellenistic coins in Afrasiab and the environs of Samarqand for over a decade and by doing this was able to double the existing list (Atakhodzhaev, 2013). Among the coins he published, five similar specimens with the name of Antiochus proved to be difficult to attribute – up to now no specimens of this type had come to the attention of numismatists⁶. Below is the general description of the type:



Drawing by Françes Ory

Obv.: Crab; beaded border

Rev.: Bee; a monogram to the left of its head; inscription in two vertical lines by the sides of the image [BA]ΣΙΛΕΩΣ ANTIOXOY.

Weight – from 1.9 to 3.2 grams; D – from 12x13 to 15x18 mm; axes – VI (in one case V)

The type is rather unusual for the Seleucid coinage and there is nothing in these coins that at the present level of our knowledge would allow one to attribute them to a particular Antiochus. Atakhodzhaev suggested that these were the coins of Antiochus III brought from Asia Minor and the Aegean Islands: he suggests that during the siege of Bactra ca. 206 BC the troops of Antiochus also invaded Sogdiana.

It is not hard to notice several fundamental flaws in this argumentation. First, it is hard to believe that soldiers from the western part of the empire brought with them small change to the eastern provinces in the quantities that would make these coins traceable in our limited sample of Hellenistic coins. Furthermore, it is impossible to assume that they brought with them just this single type of Antiochus III – with five coins of this evidently extremely rare type, it would be difficult to explain why no single specimen representing any of the dozens of common types minted under the same Seleucid monarch have been found in Sogdiana.

Atakhodzhaev seems to imply that Seleucid generals used these coins to pay soldiers on the spot. This is also hardly conceivable – why would Antiochus order the transportation of bronze coins on such a distance when he had a number of eastern mints available, or could easily have organized a camp mint? After all, the minting of copper would not require highly skilled staff capable of tight control over the weight and fineness of coins.

Could it be that Antiochus or his generals minted these coins on the spot during the temporary occupation of Sogdiana? While it is in principle possible, the composition of the finds does not seem to support such an interpretation: from the half a century of Seleucid control we have 29 coins in Samarqand, 24 of them copper, while the short military occupation by the troops of Antiochus III, which by no means could have extended beyond one year, left us five unrelated stray finds. In other words, in order to accept this interpretation we would have to imagine certain circumstances that increased many fold the frequency of coin loss among the soldiers of Antiochus III.

It seems much more likely, that the Antiochus of these coins was either Antiochus I or Antiochus II, both of whom were in control of Sogdiana. Unfortunately, the five known specimens are in such a poor condition, that it is not possible to decide firmly in favour of one or another of these monarchs and we should leave this question to future researchers.

Regardless of the specific date of these coins they ought to be local. There are two serious arguments in favour of this. The first one is that such coins have not been found on the territory of Bactria, where, in addition to a relatively large volume of occasional finds, three quite sizable collections from three different sites with chronologically corresponding strata have been published: Ay-Khanum (Bernard, 1985), Takht-i Sangin (Zeimal', 1997; Zeimal', 2000, see also additions to the list by I.R. Pichikian and B.A. Litvinsky on p. 404), and Kampyr-tepa (Rtveladze and Gorin, 2011). Secondly, these five specimens constitute too large a percentage among Samarqand finds to be an import from a distant mint: no other type of Seleucid coins is represented in our sample by 5 specimens.

There are two further arguments for the Samarqand location of the mint: (1) all known specimens come from this city or from adjacent areas; (2) if there was a Seleucid mint in Sogdiana, it would likely have been in the capital of this country/province. The second argument, of course, would lose its validity if there was more than one Seleucid mint in Sogdiana, but up to now we do not have any evidence testifying to this.

Images on the coin types

At first glance, the images on the coins are hardly corresponding to the realia of Sogdiana and Samarqand. We are not aware of any bee or crab images in later Sogdian art⁷. Furthermore, crabs as species do not exist in the plain waters of Sogdiana. We should, however, remember that the coins were issued by Greek colonists and thus the local realia would be expressed in their traditional artistic language.

In Greek religion and mythology a bumble bee was commonly associated with the cult of Artemis (Elderkin, 1939: 203-213). As

the principal symbol of Artemis the image of a bee appeared on the coins of Ephesus. The same association can be discerned in the image of a bee on some other Greek and Hellenistic coins.

In Sogdiana the logical counterpart of Artemis of Ephesus would be Nana who was undoubtedly the most popular of local goddesses. It is noteworthy, that the Syriac version of the Alexander Romance reports that Alexander built in Samarqand a temple for Rhea, which locals called Nana (Budge, 1889: 115; Bernard, Grenet, Isamitdinov, 1990: 371; Bernard, Grenet, Isamitdinov, 1990: 304; Shkoda, 2009: 18). We may thus suggest that the bee on these Samarqand coins reflected this local cult.

It is much harder to offer a sensible explanation for the crab image. First of all, the crab had a rather limited presence in classical mythology and art. Even when some mythological creatures like Scylla are connected to crabs by textual evidence, their standard iconography has nothing to do with actual crabs (the sea god Phorkys, the father Scylla, was sometimes depicted with crab claws).

The images of the crab in Greek numismatics are also very limited. A crab as the central image of the type persisted only on the reverses of coins minted by the Island of Kos from Archaic to Hellenistic period. As it is commonly combined with the depiction of a club and since there is the head of Hercules on the obverse of the coins it is safe to assume that it refers to the story about the origin of the Cancer constellation, which a Roman writer of the 2nd century AD retells in the following way: "The Crab is said to have been put among the stars by the favour of Juno [Hera], because, when Hercules had stood firm against the Lernaean Hydra, it had snapped at his foot from the swamp. Hercules, enraged at this, had killed it, and Juno [Hera] put it among the constellations." (Pseudo-Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2. 23).

While the crab's Zodiacal associations are unlikely on this coin, the general reference to the water is worth pursuing. One may ask a legitimate question: why a mint master decided to depict on the coins of Samarqand a creature that was not a part of the local fauna? In order to answer this question we might want to look at a later depiction of local waters. A famous clay relief from the *eiwan* (an open-vaulted hall) of Panjikant Temple II (Belenitskii, 1959: 68-71, Plates XXVII-XXXII; Belenitskii, 1973, ill. 66-76; Belenitskii, 1980: ill. 91-100), which is certainly devoted to the cult of a Sogdian river deity, most likely to that of Zaravshan (Belenitskii, 1959: 73-77; Belenitskii, 1973: 45; Belenitskii and Marshak, 1976: 77; Belenitskii, 1980: 196; Shkoda, 2006: 105-106), uses Gandharan iconography to represent an obviously local subject. We see on this relief typical Gandharan motifs, such as Triton and Makara, but the most surprising in a Sogdian context are the depictions of dolphins. It should be mentioned that the closest dolphin habitat is in the Indus River. It appears that the Sogdians of Panjikant facing the need to decorate the *eiwan* of their temple sometime in the early 6th century, simply borrowed the entire Gandharan composition. It is impossible to say with certainty whether the artist responsible for this relief was a visiting southerner, or a local Sogdian, who used a southern prototype. There are, however, some indications, even if not conclusive, of his local origin -- human figures in this relief are slim and resemble later Sogdian images rather than the more voluminous bodies of Gandharan art⁸. In any case, the reason for such a massive "citation" from the Gandharan art was probably the lack of compatible local iconography.

A similar situation could be anticipated in Sogdiana in the 3rd century BC: judging by the currently available materials Sogdian art could not yet have reached an advanced stage and if it had any previous developed iconography for local deities, this would have been the Achaemenid one. Meanwhile, the river scenes, which were so common in monumental Assyrian art, somehow disappeared from the Achaemenid one – at least none are represented in the known corpus. All this makes us suggests a possibility, that Greeks, who settled in Sogdiana and tried to refer to the deities of the local pantheon on their coins, selected the image of a crab to make a visual reference to the revered deity of the local river.

One more question remains – why is it that the salt water crab represents a river? Well, there was a similar inconsistency already in the initial Greek myth – the fight with the Hydra took place in her swamp, while the crab was a sea creature. As a result, while reproducing the story in his Euthydemus, Plato wrote: “a crab . . . from the sea--freshly, I fancy, arrived on shore” (Plato, Euthydemus 297c).

In other words, it is possible that the images on the coins refer to local gods, which, as we can judge from the art of Panjikant remained the most revered in Sogdiana even in the VI-VIII centuries AD: Nana is most commonly depicted in private houses and we find both the image of local river and a illustration to the myth associated with Nana in the town's Temple II.

Conclusion

With all the provided argumentation for the attribution of this Seleucid coin type to the mint of Samarqand, it is still necessary to admit that the coin data is still very slim and this attribution should be considered hypothetical. Even more so would be the explanation offered for the imagery. Yet these five coins certainly stood out among the general mass of Seleucid coins found in Sogdiana and thus called for explanation, albeit a tentative one.

Notes

¹ Unfortunately, it is impossible to identify this find spot with certainty: Kurgan-tepe is one of the names most commonly used to designate archaeological ruins in Central Asia and there were several sites carrying it in the Samarqand province. There is, however, no doubt that this was a Seleucid copper found in Samarqand Sogd. I see no reason why it cannot be counted here.

² Atakhodzhaev remarks that he excluded from the list «a copper coin of Euthydemus, information of which Naymark derived from the work of M.E. Masson and passed to the reader in a form different from that of his original source. Masson reports the following: «The resurrection of the city is evidenced, apparently, by the finds of Greco-Bactrian copper coins, starting with the coinage of Euthydemus I (3rd century BC), on Afrasiab, in particular, in the southern part of the site».

Indeed, the footnote under this catalogue entry in my publication leads to Masson's article of 1950. This is a result of the specific circumstances under which my work was published – this is a somewhat abbreviated Russian translation of the first part of my larger English article that has not been published yet. Unfortunately, I was not available for consultation when this translation was done and edited. One of the fairly numerous negative results of this situation turned out to be the footnote in question – in the original it also had a reference to another Masson's publication on the early history of Samarqand-Afrasiab, where we find information about «chalkos of Euthydemus I (ca. 230-200 BC), that was brought up from the lower cultural strata of the Afrasiab site during the digging of a grave in one of the low spots of a cemetery to the north of the Shakh-i Zindeh group of mausoleums» (Masson, 1972:25). In other words, this copper of Euthydemus is a coin with a find spot. Furthermore, the person who attributed this specimen had sufficient knowledge of ancient Central Asian coinage. In fact, at that time, he was the only «professional» numismatist in the entire Central Asia. By the selection criteria established in my article and accepted in the article of Atakhodzhaev as well this specimen belongs in the list. As to the further considerations of Atakhodzhaev – they are completely arbitrary. Indeed, as we know nothing about the actual type of the coin, there is little value in speculating that Masson mistook for a coin of Euthydemus I «a Seleucid chalkos with ... and with the image of Hercules head on the obverse and a bull walking to the right [on the reverse – A.N.], i.e. the monetary type that became known much later, due to the publications by Paul Bernard and Eugene Zeimal». While it is indeed true that this specimen is the only copper of Euthydemus in the list and thus «falls out of the pattern», it cannot be omitted from the database for the reason of «non-compliance» with the scholarly conclusions!

³ Except for the addition of the eight new specimens, however, this booklet simply repeats the original publications by Rtveldze, including all minor mistakes.

⁴ All later references to this hoard (VASMER, 1929: 282, No. 1; Thompson, Mörkholm, Kraay, 1973: 265, No. 1827) are based on the initial information of Masson.

⁵ Three of these are preserved in the collection of the Samarqand Museum (N-9984 - 6).

⁶ When the extensive search for the coins of this type in the existing literature, which in 2007 N.M. Smirnova and A.I. Naymark undertook in Russian and British libraries by the request of A. Atakhodzhaev, brought no results, the author of this article consulted with Brian Kritt and Oliver

Hoover, the most authoritative specialists on Seleucid coinage. These gentlemen independently from each other confirmed that this is a new (hitherto unknown) type. I am grateful to both of them for this consultation.

⁷ The “crab” on at least two coins seems to have something like a separate head shown by three tightly packed dots. For a moment I entertained the idea that this is not a crab, but rather a spider, which would make it an image of Arachne (possibly serving as the reference to Athena). Yet, the way in which the legs of the creature are shown replicates an “anatomically incorrect” representation of a crab typical of Greek art.

⁸ This general slimness of figures must have been the feature of this relief that prompted Paul Bernard to say that «in Soghd the Greek elements, even in the 6th century, as for example on the clay frieze of Panjikant, were executed with better understanding of the spirit of Greek art, than Greek elements in the art of Kushan Bactria, where they were much more orientalized» (Marshak, 1987: 236).

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TWO NEW TYPES OF KUSHAN FORGERIES

By Pankaj Tandon¹

As collectors and students of coins, we constantly have to be on the lookout for forgeries. People have been forging coins since ancient times, so this problem is not something new. However, the methods used to create forgeries are constantly evolving and it behooves us to be aware of this. In a recent article, I highlighted a method of forging that seems to be becoming more common: tooling or carving a genuine coin to create something that it wasn't to begin with, presumably something a lot more valuable than the original coin. In this paper, I record another type of phenomenon that I have seen twice recently with Kushan coins: using genuine coins to create new denominations.

The first coin is pictured in Figure 1. It purports to be a quarter dinar of Kanishka III (previously assigned to Kanishka II), the low denomination version of Göbl 635, which carries the Brāhmī letter *pri* in the right obverse field. The style looks perfectly correct and the weight, at 1.87 gm, seems quite appropriate for a worn quarter dinar. Initially, therefore, it seemed genuine, and an exciting new discovery, as no coin of this denomination is known for the type. Sadly, however, it turns out to be a dangerous new type of forgery.



Figure 1: Purported quarter dinar of Kanishka III
Weight = 1.87 gm, Diameter: 17.5-19 mm.

The first doubts arose in my mind as soon as I held the coin in my hand. The surface had the rough, pitted look of a cast coin. Sometimes, however, a genuine coin that has suffered corrosion from its long stay in an inhospitable environment can also display such a surface. So my next step was to examine the edge. This showed three features that would mark it as different from a genuine coin:

1. Overall, the edge was quite smooth, rather than having the pits and cracks that a genuine coin would typically display.
2. In places, it was possible to detect parallel grooves such as would be created by the action of a modern file. Although this is difficult to capture with the simple camera at my disposal, see panel (a) of Figure 2 to get some idea of the grooves.
3. In places, there was a subtle ridge around the centre of the edge. When a coin is cast, molten metal is poured in between the two moulds which are held tightly together. Naturally, some of the metal seeps in between the edges of the two moulds and this forms a thin projecting ring around the edge of the coin. This ring must be filed away to give the coin its normal look, which is why a file has to be used along the edge. The ridge is the remnant of this ring ... parts that were not removed by the file. Again, this was very subtle, but Figure 2(b) attempts to capture it: the light catches the high point of the edge. On a genuine coin, there should be no high point in the centre of the edge.



Figure 2: The coin's edge
(a) File marks
(b) Ridge

So a close examination of the coin suggested it was cast. Cast forgeries are nothing new, of course. I recently documented a cast forgery of a silver drachm of the Indo-Greek king Philoxenus and published it on a Facebook discussion group and also on the CoinIndia website.² The typical cast forgery uses a genuine coin to create the moulds from which the cast copies are made. But this coin was a cast of a previously unknown coin type. The style was so good, I knew a genuine coin must have been used to create the moulds. But, since no genuine coin of this type is known, I was left wondering how the moulds were made. Perhaps, I thought, a genuine coin had been found and the owner made a cast copy, keeping the genuine coin for his or her own collection. However, I finally realised this was not the case. Rather, the moulds had been made using a full dinar as the model!



Figure 3: Size comparison of the coin with Göbl 635.5 and an example of Göbl 636

The dimensions of the coin should have alerted me at once. The flan is somewhat ovoid, with a diameter of 17.5 mm from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock, but a diameter of 19 mm from 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock. Quarter dinars of this series normally have a diameter of around 13 mm. By contrast, of the five examples of Göbl 635 I had available for direct examination, four had a diameter of 21 mm and one of 20 mm. Thus the "length" of the subject coin was closer to that of the dinar rather than a quarter dinar. Figure 3 shows a photograph of the coin laid next to the illustration from Göbl's book of coin number 635.5,³ along with an example of Göbl 636 from my collection. It can be seen that the size of the standing figure is much closer to the size of the figure in the dinar than the one in the quarter dinar. As Joe Cribb pointed out to me in an email exchange, there can be some shrinkage in the process of creating a mould from an original coin. If the process was carried out more than once, the shrinkage could be made more substantial. In addition, the feet of the king are off the flan of the forgery, accommodating the smaller flan. The reverse figure of Ardochsho similarly came close in size to the figure seen on examples of Göbl

635. It appears, therefore, that a genuine full dinar was used to make the moulds for the coin, which was then cast with a flan of approximately the 2 gm that would be expected for a quarter dinar.

The second coin I wish to discuss is pictured in Figure 4. This one purports to be a double unit (octadrachm) of Vima Kadphises. Again, this denomination is not known for Vima Kadphises; the common denomination is the single unit or tetradrachm of approximately 17 gm, and half and quarter units are also known. So a double unit, if genuine, would be a find indeed. The style of the coin looked perfectly normal and the weight, at 33.38 gm, seemed just right for a double unit. Sadly, this coin turned out not to be genuine either.

Once I got the coin in my hand, I was surprised that the diameter was only 28.5 mm, which is normal for single units. I had expected a coin that was larger in diameter than the tetradrachm. The extra weight was created by a significantly greater thickness, which was 6 mm for the coin, a good deal thicker than the single units. A look at the edge revealed the method of manufacture. The edge displays distinct layers, three in all, suggesting that at least two genuine coins had been fused together, with some filler added between them to accommodate the reliefs of the devices. Figure 5 shows two views of the edges of the coin. A look at the edge of course made it quite easy to identify this coin as a forgery. Lluís Mendieta, a professional chemist, informed me how easy it would be to create the “patina” seen on the edge, thus assuring the conclusion.



Figure 4: Supposed double unit (octadrachm) of Vima Kadphises
Weight = 33.38 gm, Diameter = 28.5 mm

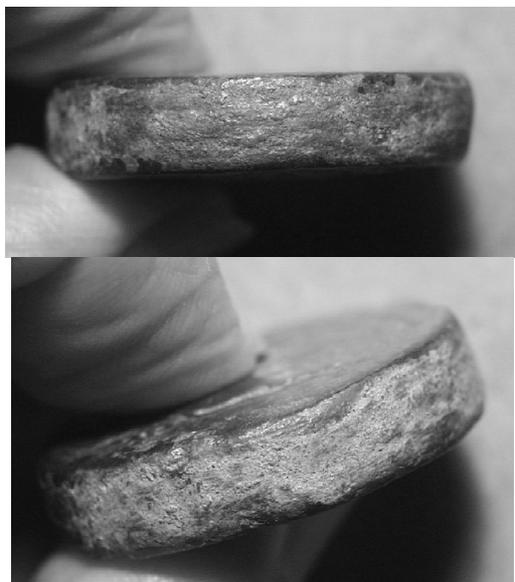


Figure 5: Two views of the edge of the coin

The innovativeness of the forgery workshops is something to be expected. As collectors, we need to be on constant watch for new techniques of fooling us. The more we spot these techniques and make others aware of them, the safer we will be from these criminal elements working to exploit people’s desire for rare and unique coins. Both these coins apparently originated in Pakistan, as did the tooled forgeries I documented in my earlier paper, so

buyers of Kushan coins sourced in that country need to be extra careful.

Notes

¹ Boston University. I wish to thank Joe Cribb and Lluís Mendieta for helpful email exchanges.

² See the Philoxenus drachm discussed on the webpage: <http://coinindia.com/archive2.html>.

³ Robert Göbl: *Münzprägung des Kušanreiches*, Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984, plate 51.

THE MURSHIDABAD HOARD OF GUPTA COINS

by Karan Singh¹

Bengal is where the study of Gupta coinage began. The first-ever documented hoard of Gupta gold coins was found here in 1783, when around 200 pieces were discovered at Kalighat (now in Kolkata).² Since then three small hoards have been discovered in the region – 13 coins in 1883, 11 coins in 1976, and 7 coins in 1981³ – but these were meagre in comparison to the hoards found in the northern plains of India. That is, until the monsoon of 2013.

On May 31, 2013, a chance discovery of a gold coin in the wet mud at a construction site on National Highway 34 in West Bengal set off a frenzy among local villagers, who flocked to the spot, eager to get their hands on gold coins. By the time the media had got wind of the find and the police swung into action, three days had passed.

The police subsequently raided the nearby village of Sarla and reportedly confiscated 11 coins,⁴ which were then kept locked in a tiffin box at the Suti Police Station as of December 2, 2013.⁵

I had the opportunity of visiting the find spot in October and November 2013 and tracked down the villagers who possessed coins. Naturally suspicious of outsiders, many did not allow photographs to be taken of their pieces. But I was nevertheless able to build up a picture of the hoard before it was dispersed.

Barring the 10 or so coins that were apparently bought by traders before I reached Murshidabad,⁶ and the 11 coins confiscated by the police, I was able to see all the remaining coins, which were 59 in number. This means that the total number of coins found was around 80.

The Murshidabad hoard, therefore, ranks among the larger hoards recorded of Gupta gold coins.⁷ It is also interesting as coins of most Gupta kings are represented, from Samudragupta to Kumaragupta II. Overall the quality and condition of these coins is extremely fine, showing very little evidence of circulation. In fact, the superb condition of the specimens leads me to believe they were temple donations, but more on that later.

Most of these coins have since reached the trade and are believed to now be in private collections, with one prominent specimen even featuring in an auction sale in December 2013.⁸

List of Coins

I am listing 70 out of the 80 coins discovered. These include the pieces seen by me (59) as well as those earlier seized by the authorities (11).

| King | Coin Type | No. | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----|---|
| Samudragupta | King & Queen Type | 1 | |
| | Sceptre Type | 8 | |
| | Ashvamedha Type | 1 | Extremely rare <i>hayamedhaparākramah</i> legend on reverse |
| | Lyrist Type | 3 | |
| Chandragupta II | Sceptre Type | 1 | |
| | Archer Type | 17 | |
| | Horseman Type | 2 | |

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------|---|
| | Chhatra Type | 2 | |
| Chandragupta III | Archer Type | 2 | Crescent symbol on obverse |
| | | 2 | Wheel/circle symbol on obverse |
| Kumaragupta I | Horseman Type | 4 | |
| Skandagupta | Archer Type | 5 | <i>sri skandaguptah</i> legend on reverse |
| | | 2 | <i>kramadityah</i> legend on reverse |
| | King & Queen Type | 2 | |
| Narasimhagupta | Archer Type | 17 | |
| Kumaragupta II | Archer Type | 1 | |
| Total | | 70 | |

The remaining 10 or so coins were acquired by traders before my arrival, but I believe these included one Samudragupta King & Queen Type, one Kumaragupta Tiger-slayer Type and one Skandagupta King & Queen Type.



Fig. 1 - Six Murshidabad coins seized by police, *The Telegraph*



Fig. 2 - Samudragupta, King & Queen Type, Murshidabad hoard



Fig. 3 - Samudragupta, Ashvamedha Type 'hayamedhaparākramah' variety, Murshidabad hoard



Fig. 4 - Chandragupta II, Archer Type, Murshidabad hoard



Fig. 5 - Kumaragupta I, Horseman Type, Murshidabad hoard



Fig. 6 - Skandagupta, Archer Type 'sri skandaguptah' variety, Murshidabad hoard



Fig. 7 - Skandagupta, Archer Type 'kramadityah' variety, Murshidabad hoard



Fig. 8 - Skandagupta, King & Queen Type, Murshidabad hoard, listed in Todywalla Auctions, no. 82, Lot 679

The Find Spot

The hoard was discovered at Ahiran in Murshidabad district, 260km north of Kolkata. Here an additional approach road was being prepared for a bridge across the Farakka Feeder Canal, and the mud needed for this was brought from elsewhere by a local contractor. It was only later that this mud was found to contain gold coins.



Fig. 9 - The coins were discovered at this construction site at Ahiran

So where did these coins actually come from? Contractors usually dig out the topsoil from unused land near their construction site and transport it there. This is an unauthorised but common practice, which has left many rural areas pockmarked. The mud in question was found to have been excavated from Bijoypur, 15 km to the south. This spot lies amid mustard fields near two villages, Kathnai and Bodhpur, just east of a town called Mirzapur.

Bijoypur (or City of Victory) lies at a higher elevation than the area around it. A large section of what was reportedly the highest part of the mound had been dug out to a depth of 1.5 to 2.8 metres. This then was where the hoard was originally kept in an earthen pot (fragments of which were reportedly found at Ahiran), which was unwittingly crushed by an excavator machine when its operator was digging out the earth. The coins were then scattered in the mud as it was carted to Ahiran.



Fig. 10 - Bijoypur - the excavated mound is just left of the clump of trees at the horizon top left

Nature of the Site

Locals who are now trying their luck at digging at the excavated spot in Bijoypur have reported finding small flat bricks. This reveals the existence of an earlier structure on this spot.

The site is flanked by two dried-up circular ponds; the southern pond is larger than its northern counterpart. The elevated location and the existence of two ponds on either side make this an ideal spot for a temple.

I believe this was the site of a Gupta-era temple that fell into ruin with only its foundations remaining in the modern age. These were disturbed by the contractor in May 2013, releasing the hoard that had lain buried for over 1,400 years. The name of the adjacent village – Bodhpur – is significant, pointing to the Buddhist traditions that were likely to have been prevalent in this area. The former temple at Bijoypur may well have been a Buddhist stupa.



Fig. 11 - The area dug out by a contractor at Bijoypur

Significance of Location

Bijoypur lies approximately 300 km east of the Gupta imperial city, Pataliputra. Prior to this hoard's discovery, the lack of Gupta coin finds in north Bengal had long seemed inexplicable.⁹ After all, this region (then known as Varendra) lay immediately east of the core of the empire – the modern states of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

The modern district of Murshidabad is fertile and must have been an important agrarian centre under the Guptas. Fed by the river Bhagirathi (Hooghly), a distributary of the Ganga, this area

could also have been a staging post on the way to ports along the Bay of Bengal.

The Murshidabad coin hoard, therefore, offers an opportunity to present an economic picture that has been conspicuously blank on any map of the Gupta empire.

The spot where the coins were originally buried is just 5 km from the present channel of the Bhagirathi, indicating that this was close to the riverine route. It may also explain the uncirculated condition of the specimens in the hoard – these may represent donations made by wealthy traders and pilgrims on their way to and from the imperial centre upstream.



Fig. 12 - Dried-up pond at the north side of Bijoypur

In this context it is interesting to note that the 7th century Chinese pilgrim Yijing (or I-Tsing) referred to a Buddhist temple that may have been located in the Murshidabad district. While describing the itinerary of the earlier Korean pilgrim Hwui-lun, Yijing wrote in *K'iu-fa-ko-sang-chian* that “about forty *yojanas* to the east of the temple of Nalanda, descending the Ganges, one arrives at the temple of Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no”.¹⁰ Edward Chavannes restored Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no as Mrgasikhavana,¹¹ but Alfred Foucher pointed out that the correct Indian original was Mrgasthāpana.¹²

Taking one *yojana* to equal 5 5/7 miles, D.C. Ganguly calculated that the Mrgasthāpana temple was 228 miles (365km) east of Nalanda¹³ which places it somewhere in Murshidabad district and tantalisingly close to modern Bijoypur.

This conclusion was contested by B.P. Sinha, who, using an earlier translation of Yijing's account by Samuel Beal, instead identified Mrgasikhavana with Mrigadaya or the Deer Park near Sarnath.¹⁴ Ashvini Agrawal supported this identification, claiming that an important temple would have been at one of the four holy spots for Buddhist pilgrimage in India, rather than at “a little known spot in Varendra.”¹⁵

This view is untenable as the Deer Park was situated twenty *yojanas* west of Nalanda; Yijing had unequivocally mentioned the temple's location to be forty *yojanas* east of Nalanda, i.e. somewhere in Bengal.

The clinching evidence is provided by an illustrated manuscript of the *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita* from Nepal, copied in AD 1015,¹⁶ which contains a picture of a stupa labelled as ‘Mrgasthāpana Stupa of Varendri’.¹⁷ It is clear, therefore, that the Mrgasthāpana stupa was located in Varendra, a conclusion that was corroborated by R.C. Majumdar.¹⁸

According to Yijing's account, not far from the Mrgasthāpana temple there lay “a ruined establishment, without its foundations remaining, called the Tchina (or China) Temple... Tradition says that formerly a Maharaja called Sri-Gupta built this temple for the use of Chinese priests... he gave them the land and the revenues of about twenty villages as an endowment.”¹⁹

Perhaps Bijoypur was the site of this Tchina stupa that lay in ruins when Hwui-lun visited India in the 7th century. It would explain why the Murshidabad hoard ends with Kumaragupta II (c. AD 473-476), unlike the Kalighat hoard, which contained coins of the later Gupta Kings Vainyagupta, Kumaragupta III and Vishnugupta.

If Bijoypur was indeed on the pilgrim route at the time of the Guptas, the coins discovered here may have been donated by visitors spread over a century.²⁰ But this hypothesis cannot be confirmed until a proper excavation is conducted at the site itself. A good place to start would be the two dried-up ponds, which could provide archaeological evidence of human activity.

It is, therefore, inexcusable that the Archaeological Survey of India has failed to show any interest in the hoard. Even after the media broke the news in early June 2013, the ASI failed to cordon off the find spots at Ahiran and Bijoypur to study the hoard and its context. Six months after the hoard was discovered, the ASI had still not collected the 11 coins lying with the local police.

This inaction seems even more galling when one considers that at the same time the ASI was busy digging for gold at Unnao in Uttar Pradesh, drawn by a holy man's dream of 1,000 tons of buried gold.²¹ Perhaps this government agency could have served Indian history and numismatics better by reacting promptly and professionally when a coin hoard was actually discovered.

I hope this first detailed description of the Murshidabad hoard will help both collectors and students of Gupta numismatics appreciate the range and background of these coins, and that it may open another chapter in our knowledge of the Gupta empire.

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1. I wish to thank Dr Ellen Raven, Universiteit Leiden, for her valuable suggestions and the residents of Sarla for allowing me to examine and photograph their finds.
2. A.S. Altekar, *Catalogue of the Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard*, 1954, p. iv.
3. B.N. Mukherjee, *Coins and Currency System in Gupta Bengal*, 1992, pp. 50-51.
4. The villagers allege that the policemen had actually confiscated around 30 coins, but officially announced only 11 coins. There is no way to confirm or disprove this allegation, so I am sticking to the official figure.
5. "Gupta era' gold coins found in Bengal; 6 months on, ASI yet to act", *Indian Express*, December 2, 2103.
6. This is according to local eyewitness accounts.
7. Most recorded Gupta hoards are small in size, ranging from 7 to 40 gold coins. See Altekar, pp. iv-x.
8. Todywalla Auctions, no. 82, Lot 679, December 2013.
9. All four hoards discovered previously in Bengal were in Kolkata and Hooghly districts in south Bengal.
10. D.C. Ganguly, 'The Original Home of the Imperial Guptas', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, 1952, p. 390.
11. *Voyages des Pelerins Bouddhistes*, p. 82.
12. *Etudes sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde d'apres des documents nouveaux*, 1900, pp. 62-63.
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15. *Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas*, 1989, pp. 81-82.
16. S.K. Saraswati, *Architecture of Bengal*, Book 1, 1976, p. 22.
17. R.C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, 1943, Vol. 1, p. 69.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Samuel Beal, *The Life of Hiuen Tsang*, 1911, Introduction, pp. xxxvi ff.
20. Starting from Samudragupta (c. 335-375 CE), coins all the way to Kumaragupta II (c. 473-476 CE) have been found in the hoard, so the coinage range is 141 years.
21. 'No sign of gold, ASI stops Unnao digging', *Indian Express*, November 19, 2013.

A BUKHARKHUDA DIRHAM FROM KURA/MTKVARI RIVER IN GEORGIA

By Aleksandr Naymark (New York), Irakli Paghava (Tbilisi)

In 2013, a Bukharkhuda dirham was recovered from the river Kura/Mtkvari in the territory of modern Tbilisi (weight – 2.07 grams, axes – 7 hours). The coin is severely worn, but small sections of the circular legend are preserved above the head of the king and behind his back at the level of the crown's base, as well as straight horizontal elements of an inscription under the chest of the effigy and in front of its face. These allow us to identify the type as the one carrying the inscription: *bi-ism allāh muḥammad rasūl allāh muḥammadiyya mimmā amara bi-hi al-amūn 'alī ('alā [yaday]?) sulaymān lillāh*.



Fig. 1. Bukharkhuda dirham found in the River Kura (Mtkvari) in Tbilisi (photo by Irakli Paghava)



Fig. 2. Bukharkhuda dirham of "muḥammadiyya" type with fully legible legend (Zeno.ru 113508).

Caliph al-Amīn who is mentioned in the legend reigned in AH 193-198 (March 809-September AD 813). Accordingly, John Walker provisionally dated this type to AH 193-195 (Walker, 1941: xcvcv). Yet Luke Treadwell pointed out that starting with AH 193 the mints of Mawaraannahr, Bukhara and Samarqand began to strike large quantities of regular caliph dirhams bearing the name of al-Amīn's brother and competitor, al-Ma'mūn. As it is unlikely that al-Amīn's laqab appeared on Bukharkhuda dirhams in the area controlled by al-Ma'mūn, Treadwell reasonably suggested that Bukharkhuda dirhams with the name al-Amīn were struck «during the reign of Amīn's father, Hārūn, possibly as early as AH 176, when Amīn's title first appears on dirhams of al-Muḥammadiya» (Treadwell, 2007: 27). It does not mean, of course, that the specimen in question reached Tbilisi in the first decades of the 9th century or shortly after that – this type of Bukharkhuda dirhams remained in circulation for a very long time, as is evidenced by the hoards in which such coins are found together with the "regular" Qaraghanid issues bearing Hijra dates. The Beshik-tepe hoard from Samarqand province with the latest Qaraghanid coin dated to 433/1041-42 contained four thousand Bukharkhuda coins, over five hundred of them "with the long inscription" (Kochnev, 1990: 55); a hoard from Samarqand with the latest date 483/1090-91 had 141 Bukharkhuda dirhams, three of them "with the long inscription" (Kochnev, 1990: 55); a hoard from Varganzi in the area of Kesh contains a specimen dated to the same year as the Samarqand one (483/1090-91) along with 1182 Bukharkhuda dirhams, 16 of which carried "the long inscription" (Kochnev 1990, p. 56).¹ In other words, we can be sure that the coins with the title of al-Amīn stayed in circulation as late as the end of the

11th century AD and thus the specimen in question could have reached Tbilisi at any time between the beginning of the 9th and the end of the 11th century.²

In other words, the Bukharkhuda dirham found in Tbilisi belongs to a common type and its loss cannot even be dated with sufficient precision. What makes it really interesting is the find spot -- this is the westernmost Bukharkhuda dirham ever registered.

In general, coins of this group did not travel beyond the principal zone of their circulation that is beyond the areas of Central Mawarannahr, Chach and the Ferghana valley, because of their unsuitability for long-distance trade. In fact, the reasons were twofold: the low content of precious metal in them and the high rates (artificially kept way above their intrinsic value) at which they were accepted in Central Asia. According to the local history, the *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, this was the result of a deliberate choice made by the Bukharans in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd:

“The money of Bukhara had disappeared among the people. When Ghitrīf b. 'Atā came to Khurāsān, the notables and leaders of Bukhara went to him and requested that since they had no silver left in the city, the Amir of Khurāsān should order money coined for them from the same die as was used for the coins of Bukhara in ancient times. «The coins should be (such) that no one would take them from us nor out of the city, so we can carry on trading among ourselves with this money». At that time silver was expensive. Then the people of the city were assembled and their opinion asked on this matter. They agreed that money should be struck of six things: gold, silver, brass³, tin, iron, and copper. So it was done. They struck coins with the former die, with the name Ghitrīf, i.e. Ghitrīfī money. The common people called them Ghidrīfī. The old coins were made with pure silver,⁴ but this money which was struck in alloy, became black, and the people of Bukhara would not accept it. The ruler became angry with them and they took the money by compulsion. The exchange was established at six Ghidrīfīs for one dirham's weight of pure silver. The government accepted it at this rate (for taxes) so that it became current” (Narshakhi-Frye, 1954: 36; Narshakhi-Frye, 2007: 52; cf. Davidovich 1997: 55).

The cross-examination of the text of *Tarikh-i Bukhara* and other early Islamic sources referring to the same phenomenon of Bukharkhuda coinage (Davidovich, 1997: 41-45) combined with the analysis of the principal material evidence, the coins themselves (Davidovich, 1997: 45-53), showed that much of the information in this account of *Tarikh-i Bukhara* was distorted in the process of abridgement and translation (Davidovich, 1997: 64). Yet one fact seems to be absolutely indisputable – there was a clear understanding among the Bukharans that these coins with low silver content remained in local circulation and did not join the steady stream of silver dirhams that was leaving Mawarannahr in the 9th and 10th centuries (Davidovich 1997, p. 64). Indeed, practically no finds of Bukharkhuda dirhams are known in Eastern and Northern Europe⁵, and we see them neither in Khorezm nor to the south of the Amu-darya, in Tokharistan and Khurasan.

With this said, we can assume that the Bukharkhuda dirham was not brought to Tbilisi in the capacity of trade money. It seems likely that this specimen travelled to the banks of the Kura/Mktvari as «pocket change» and thus can serve as evidence of a direct contact between Georgia and Mawarannahr in the early Islamic period.

Notes

¹ In his brief descriptions of these hoards, Boris Kochnev does not specify which of the two «long inscriptions» were on the coins in this hoard as well as in the two hoards mentioned below. Indeed, there were also coins with the legend «bi-ism allāh muḥammad rasūl allāh al-khāqān al-a'zam amīn (?) amīr al-mu'minīn». Yet earlier in the same article Kochnev describes the type with laqab al-Amīn as the one with the «long inscription» (Kochnev, 1990: 49) and further talks about dirhams «muḥammadiyya» in all three hoards (Kochnev, 1990: 58).

² During the quarter of a century that passed since Kochnev's article was published, more data of a similar nature has been recorded. Unfortunately, it remains mostly unpublished.

³ The word found here in the majority of the manuscripts is most likely the result of corruption that occurred in the course of the book's translation into Persian and the consequent copying of manuscripts. W.B. Henning's suggestion that this is an unknown New Persian term for 'brass' was accepted by R.N. Frye (Narshakhi, 1954: 36; Narshakhi, 2007: 52). Yet the question is certainly not settled and remains the subject of a discussion (Davidovich, 1997: 35-39, 66).

⁴ As E.A. Davidovich has already pointed out, this statement is not exactly correct as the last types of Bukharkhuda drachms, which were issued certainly prior to Ghitrīf's reform, already had up to 30% admixture in their metal (Davidovich, 1997: 50 and 64). Davidovich was also looking for an answer to the important question of when this gradual process of debasement actually started (Davidovich, 1997: 25). Analyses done by Dr Northover at Oxford University labs showed that the Mug drachms minted in Samarqand soon after the Arab capture of this city in AD 712 were already being struck from an alloy containing 83-84% silver. This, however, could have been concealed from the general public – analyses showed that the already struck coins underwent the chemical procedure of surface silver enrichment, which raised the amount of precious metal in their thin external layers to 93-94%.

⁵ As opposed to pre-Islamic Bukharkhuda drachms. From the specimens published (Goldina and Nikitin, 1997: catalogue nos. 29, 32, 37, 43, 48), one can conclude that Bukharkhuda drachms started flowing into Kama region as early as the second half of the 6th century or, possibly, slightly later – in its final decades. This would be consistent with the events on the Silk Road: by the middle of the 6th century both Iran and Byzantium organized their own silk production and the prices of this commodity drastically dropped throughout the entire trans-Eurasian trade. This would be exactly the moment for Sogdian merchants to start looking for another subject suitable for international trade, a commodity that could sustain the same level of profits. From the finds of Bukharkhuda coins in the Kama area it appears that northern furs became their new subject of attention. As to the closing date -- there are no 8th century coins among the specimens published by Goldina and Nikitin, albeit recently one specimen of early Mug drachm (unpublished) datable to the second decade of the 8th century was recovered from the site of a long functioning shrine in Kama area [on the date of the type see: Naymark 2010, p. 8]. No later Bukharkhuda coins have been registered in this area yet and we can assume that they indeed stopped coming to Eastern Europe already in the early 8th century. For the sake of accuracy it should be noted here that V.IU. Morozov mentions 10 finds of Bukharkhuda coins in the Kama area (Morozov, 1996: 152-153). Subtracting from this number 5 specimens presented in the article by Goldina and Nikitin we can conclude that at least 5 more specimens had been recovered in the area by the mid 1990s. These, however, were published neither then (Goldina and Nikitin, 1997: 123, footnote 4), nor in more recent years – I am not aware of any fresher work presenting these coins. As a result we cannot take them into consideration here.

It is also worth mentioning the different chronological range of Khorezmian silver coins that are known in some quantities in Eastern Europe. Morozov talks about 14 specimens found in the Kama region by the middle of the 1990s (Morozov, 1996: 152-153). Of these, Noonan listed five (Noonan, 1985 [1987] 243-245, 253), and five were published by Goldina and Nikitin (1997, catalogue nos. 33, 34, 55, 63, 76). The rest (four specimens) apparently remain unpublished. Yet it is already clear that the existing sample of Khorezmian coins is later in date than that of the Bukharkhudas. The earliest Khorezmian coin was minted under Bravik in the 7th century (Goldina and Nikitin, 1997: catalogue nos. 63), while three other identifiable coins in the same publication (one of Kanik and two of Sawshafan) belong to the 8th century (Goldina and Nikitin, 1997: catalogue nos. 55 and 33-34). Of five coins from the Kama area published by Noonan one is of Sawshafan, while four other are struck on the pattern of Azkazwar II, and at least one of the latter carries an Arabic inscription 'Abd Allāh above the horse's crop (Noonan, 1985[1987]: 243-245). Recently discovered specimens with a better preserved Arabic legend revealed the full name of this person mentioned – it turned out to be 'Abd Allāh b. Tahīr, who served as the governor of Khurasan from AD 828 to 845 (Goncharov, Nastich, 2013: 87). Of two other coins found in Eastern Europe, one discovered in Novgorod was identified as the type of Azkazwar II with the name of 'Abd Allāh (Gaidukov and Nikitin, 1981: 116), while another one figures in the literature with the attribution “probably of Azkazwar II” (Gaidukov and Nikitin, 1981: 116; Noonan, 1985)

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COINS OF AL-HIND

By Rear Admiral Sohail Khan (Rtd) and Riaz Babur



Umayyad-style silver dirham 2.81 g, Al-Hind, AH 97 (collection of one of the authors)

On the obverse:

- in the field

لا اله الا
الله وحده
لا شريكه

On the reverse:

الله احد الله
الصمد لم يلدو
لم يولد ولم يكن
له كفوا احد

- in the margin

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدرهم
بالبند سنة سبع و تسعين

Bismillah Duriba Hadha Al-Dirham
bi-Al-Hind Sanata Sabaa wa Tisaveen

محمد رسول الله ارسله بالهدى
و دين الحق ليظهر على الدين كله
ولو كره المشركون



Mahmud of Ghazni gold dinar 11.6 g, Bilad Dar al Jihad Hind, AH 397 (Goron /Goenka GZ 1)¹

On the obverse:

- in the margin

ضرب هذا الدينار في البلد
دار الجهاد هند سنة سبع تسعين و ثلث مائة

Duriba Hadha Al-Dinar Fi Al-Balad

Dar Al-Jihad Hind Sanata Sabaa Tisaveen wa Thalatha Miya

- in the field

محمودى

On the reverse:

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله
القادر يا الله
امير المؤمنين

Two extremely rare coins have not been discussed in detail by numismatists for want of information about precisely where they were struck, and, in the case of the first one, about who actually struck it. They are an Umayyad-style silver dirham with mintname Al-Hind, and a gold dinar of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni issued from Bilad Dar ul Jihad Hind. This paper makes an attempt to clarify the missing pieces of information, especially "What was the Al-Hind territory of these coins?" The gold coin is not a commemorative medallion: the coin itself says, "I am a dinar" i.e. a gold coin, a commemorative dinar, with all the attributes of a coin - its denomination/ appellation, name of the issuing authority, place of issue and date of issue.

For thousands of years India had remained accessible only from the western approaches, while its eastern borders have never been breached by any travellers, traders, migrating peoples, or invading forces. The littoral land of India was breached in very recent times from the seaward by the three European colonial powers: the British, the French and the Dutch. It is worth noting that India did not have clearly defined land borders prior to the 19th century. On the western side under our examination, Afghanistan, as we see it today, is a relatively new country. Even in the relatively recent past, Kabul and Qandahar were Mughal areas from the time Babur conquered them in AD 1504-1518. Mughal mints at these places regularly issued rupee coins bearing the name of the reigning Mughal emperor of India. Qandahar was, for a short time, returned to the Persian Shah by Emperor Akbar to fulfil the promise that his

¹This piece was first published by C.R. Singhal in 'Rare and unique gold coins of the early Muslim rulers', *JNSI*, XIV (1952), pp.123-135. It is also included in J. Deyell *Living Without Silver*, Delhi, 1990, p. 74, 345, and S.Goron & J.P. Goenka *Coins of the Indian Sultanates*, Delhi, 2001, p. xxvi.

father Humayun had made to Shah Tahmasp Safavi in return for his help. It reverted to the Mughals soon after. The Shahs of Iran, however, kept sought to regain the city, and this they did later in the reign of Shah Jahan. Nevertheless, the country of Afghanistan did not exist as a unit until the death of the Iranian king, Nadir Shah, in 1747, when Ahmad Shah Abdali carved out what became the Durrani Empire, comprising all of present Afghanistan, part of Khurasan, and a large area on either side of the River Indus. These latter territories were lost later when the British demarcated the eastern boundary of Afghanistan by "The Durand Line", which was accepted by the then Amir of Afghanistan.

By the latter half of the 7th century, the Islamic Empire was expanding fast eastwards, extending its control over the Sasanian possessions: Seistan, Merv, and across the Oxus river to Bukhara, which was taken by Qutaiba Ibn Muslim in AH 93 / AD 712. Despite many expeditions, the Muslim governors of Khurasan and their forces could not establish themselves into areas south of the Hindu Kush range. Eastern Afghanistan and India remained in the hands of Shahi kings, who had successfully guarded for a few centuries all the passes leading into medieval India. Having been blocked successfully from penetrating into the plains from the northern side, the expanding Muslim forces took the southern route when Al-Hajjaj conceived of an expedition across the inhospitable southern coastal route through Makran and Sind. "If Alexander can walk through it, why can't the Arabs?"

Arab geographers had coined two names for the two halves of the north-western Indo-Pakistan sub-continent (now Pakistan). The littoral and southern portion of this long chunk of land, and land alongside the lower end of the River Indus (then Mehran), was called Sind (from its Sanskrit name Sindhu). The much larger lands of Multan and west of Multan towards Uch, north, and north-west were Hind, wherein "The Salt Range" was famous to traders all over Asia travelling overland through present Afghanistan.

Al-Hind is mentioned in two places: when the Arabs arrived there, they discovered a "quenched and tempered steel-making technique", and they called it "Faulad al-Hind", which soon became well known in the heartland of the Islamic world with a new name as 'Damascus Steel'. The famous writer, Abu Raihan Al-Beruni, attached to the court of the great Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, spent nearly a decade in Al-Hind and visited Bhera, Uch, Multan, Jhelum, Sialkot and Lahore. Though reluctant in the beginning, Hindu philosophers welcomed him. It is in these areas that he wrote his classic encyclopaedic book *Kitab Tarikh al-Hind*, wherein he discusses every aspect of life: philosophy, history, religion, mathematics, physics, natural sciences, geography and astronomy, as he found them in "Al-Hind" and surely Al-Beruni had not gone into the Gangetic Plains and Bihar. It would be an error to consider the Al-Hind of early Muslims as referring to the whole of India, comprising the Gangetic Plain, Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan. Hindustan was first an informal Persian/Farsi depiction of land where Hinduism was practised, and not the name of any well-defined country. Even in the early days of the Mughals, Indian provinces were individually referred to as geographical units, which were designated as subahs (or provinces): e.g. Kashmir, Punjab, Agra, Awadh, Bengal, Orissa, Malwa, Rajhistan, Gujrat, and Deccan. Later this term 'Hindustan' was used to refer to Dehli-Agra-Awadh, or the Gangetic Plain Doab area (fertile land between the two rivers, Jumna and Ganges) by those living far away from the Dehli-Agra hub in Kabul, Punjab, Bengal and Deccan. Hind nowadays means the whole of the Republic of India and it shows how deep a significance the original name Al-Hind, given by the early Muslims, has achieved.

It was a part of Sind called Deybul (today Lahri Bandar area), which was first taken by the expeditionary force despatched on the orders of the Umayyad caliph, Walid bin Abdul Malik, under a young warrior, Muhammad Bin Qasim, who defeated the local raja, Dahir. Lower Sind (Deybul and Mansoor) first and then Upper Sind (lower Punjab and Multan) were occupied by Muhammad Bin Qasim in AH 93 / AD 712. Caliph Walid died in February AD 715 (Jamada I, AH 96; January AD 715 according to Sir H. M. Elliot). Muhammad Bin Qasim was soon recalled and

sentenced to death by the next caliph, Sulaiman. Stanley Lane-Pool praises Muhammad Bin Qasim as a liberal who left places of worship and shrines undeseccrated.

Caliph Walid had been succeeded by his brother, Sulaiman (AD 715-717), who appointed Salih Bin Abdur Rahman as a new "Collector of Tributes". The governor sent after Muhammad Bin Qasim, was Yazid bin As-Saksaki, who died 18 days after reaching Sind. The next governor, Habib bin Al-Muhallab, was to ensure the tribute money was sent. The silver Dirham of Umayyad style, dated AH 97 (5 Sep 715 - 25 Aug 716), during the time of Caliph Sulaiman, must have been issued by this governor for coinage in Al-Hind when this tribute silver, turned into coined money (for accounting purposes), was to be made and sent. He remained governor until the reign of Caliph Umar Bin Abdul Aziz (AD 717-720).

There were no clearly defined boundaries of Muslim lands, or for that matter lands of their neighbours and opponents, in the present-day frontier areas of Pakistan, Sind and Baluchistan. The affairs of the Muslim state were carried out from a few urban centres which were garrisoned, viz. Debal, Nerun/Hyderabad, Brahmanabad/Mansura, Siwistan/Sehwan, Alor and Multan. Governors from the Banu Habbar and Banu Asad families had continued without any success in their efforts to expand north of Multan, where the Shahis continued to rule, or to the east to Rajhistan through the desert, where local rajas continued to rule. Tamims then came as governors on behalf of the Abbasid caliphs. When the Saffarids of Seistan rebelled against the Caliph of Baghdad, western and north-western Baluchistan and adjacent areas in Baluchistan, Khuzdar and Sind passed under the control of these Saffarid bands of soldiers. Consequently, Sind was not politically linked to Baghdad anymore.

With the Persian Revolution came the end of the Arab aristocracy and their appointments as governors in the eastern possessions of the Abbasid Empire. The Tahirids, a Persian-speaking people, carried the confidence of Caliph Al-Mamun and ruled Transoxonia and Khurasan independently. They were followed by the Samanids at Bokhara, who employed Turks to lead their armies. The Turks had surprised the Samanids with their remarkable courage and loyalty. It became a rule that only a Turk could lead the Muslim armies. In AD 962, Amir Abdul Malik, the Samanid ruler, died, and his brother and uncle both claimed the throne. The Turk commander of the Samanid army in Khurasan and the governor there, Alptigin, backed the uncle but the uncle was set aside by powerful nobles at Bokhara and Mansur in favour of the brother of late king. Alptigin wanted to present himself to the new Amir to pledge his loyalty, but he was informed that an execution was awaiting him. He turned south and carved out his own kingdom in Ghazni. Following him, many Turk generals took turns in running this new fiefdom and then Subuktigin succeeded them as Amir later, in AH 366 /AD 977. The Shahi king Jaipal of Kabul and Indian territories west of Indus, Peshawar and part of western Punjab, saw this newly-sprung kingdom of Ghazni as a potential threat and intended to nip the danger in the bud with a pre-emptive strike. The ruler of Ghazni, Sebuktigin, and his son, Mahmud, also took pre-emptive action. They fell on the oncoming Shahi army while it was braving an unpredicted terrible snowstorm in the Lamghan/Jalalabad area. The rout was complete. Jaipal promised to pay a large sum of money as reparations and fell back to Waihind (or Udhhabanpura, a town on the bank of the Indus, 15 miles north of present-day Attock and known as Hund), subsequently withdrawing further back into the Punjab.

North-western India (now Pakistan) was captured following various campaigns by the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, who was provoked and dragged into conflict with Shahis of Kabul and Waihind. Sebuktigin's son Mahmud, the first Muslim ruler to take the title of Sultan, took the throne of Ghazni in 399/AD 998, consolidated the kingdom of Ghazni and started strengthening his borders. C.E. Bosworth, in *The New Islamic Dynasties*, 1996, praises Mahmud; "His army was the most effective military machine of the age". In AD 999, Mahmud received a robe of honour from the caliph with the titles of "Amin al-Millat" and "Yamin al-Daula" for his services in hunting down the Carmathian

heretics in Khurasan. A general impression given by the historians that Mahmud only campaigned in India is not true. He took the entire area south of the River Oxus; Khwarazm and Balkh in the north; Khurasan in the north-west; and in the south he took over Seistan from remnants of the Saffarids. To the north-east of the kingdom of Ghazni were the lands along the River Indus, a part of Al-Hind, ruled by the Shahi kings, which had earlier unsuccessfully attacked Mahmud's father, Sebuktigin. There was another grave danger a little further on these eastern ill-defined borders of Mahmud. Mahmud had earlier answered the call of the caliph and had hunted down the Carmathians in the Persian lands of Khurasan and nearby areas, where they had seized many forts and had gone on a rampage, assassinating Sunni political and religious leaders. In a surprise development, Qaramita (Ismaili Carmathians), who had established themselves in Bahrain in AD 894, moved into Sind, which had broken its links with the Sunni centre - Baghdad. Multan was occupied in AS 983 by a Carmathian "Dai" (zealous missionary or propounder of faith) Halam bin Shaiban, who gained supreme control in upper Sind: Multan, Uch and surrounding areas. These Qaramita were treated as heretics (*Mulahida*) by Sunnis and the Abbasid caliph. They wanted them to be hounded for being supporters of a rival Fatimid caliph installed in Egypt. The beliefs of the Qaramita roused the intolerance of the orthodox and kept the Sunni kings, statesmen and theologians in perpetual fear of assassination; a reason why nearly all western historians also called them "The Assassins".

Mahmud was alarmed by the same danger on his doorstep in the form of the Qaramita of Multan, who were gaining strength in alliance with the Shahis, both of whom also saw Mahmud as a common enemy. Mahmud remembered the uninvited attack by Jaipal, the father of the present Shahi ruler, Anandpal, when Mahmud's own father was attacked. Dark clouds were gathering again. Sultan Mahmud prepared for his expedition against this danger. The British in India persistently called Mahmud's "expeditions" and incursions into India as "invasions" and plundering raids, and Muslim court writers too felt great joy in glorifying all of Mahmud's expeditions as a holy affair. They unnecessarily glorified the image of Mahmud as a warrior hero and as a model for Muslim kings. The current internet *Encyclopaedia Iranica* website says: "Mahmud's aims were 'secular and confiscatory', and not the conversion of souls and there was no Islamization". We also observe that ten years of conquests, slaughter and unsolicited attacks by the Macedonian king, Alexander The Great, in many countries, including India, are always called campaigns and not invasions. One of the most famous compilations, *History of India, as told by its own Historians* by Sir Henry M. Elliot and Professor Dawson (8 Volumes), describes in meticulous detail each of the 17 incursions of Mahmud of Ghazni as the 'First Expedition' to the 'Seventeenth Expedition', and gives reasons, too. Of these expeditions those against Bhera and Multan are of particular interest to us in determining what was the Dar al-Jihad Hind that Mahmud mentions on his gold dinar issued in AH 397 / AD 1006-1007.

After settling down in Ghazni, Mahmud turned to the danger on his eastern borders with a strong force and entered the present-day Pakistan area in AH 390 /AD 1000 through Peiwar Kotal, following the course of the Kurram River, to see whether his opponents were garrisoning their forts or not. He did not go far. He appointed his garrison commanders as administrators in many small principalities and returned after this reconnaissance. Next year, in Shawwal AH 391, Mahmud left Ghazni. Travelling northwards, he turned into the valley of another river, the Kabul River, passed through present-day Jalalabad, and was confronted in Muharram (first month of the Islamic year) AH 392/27-28 (November AD 1001) by a huge army led by Jaipal in person at Peshawar. Mahmud was victorious - he captured Jaipal and a host of his relatives and supporting rajas, but magnanimously freed Jaipal and allowed him to retreat into India. Mahmud advanced up to the western bank of the River Indus, arriving at Waihind (the present-day town of Hund, 15 miles above Attock). He had not yet crossed the Indus.

Mahmud returned to Ghazni, put Seistan in order, rested for two years and prepared for expeditions across the Indus. He entered India through the Peiwar Kotal-Bannu area in AH 395 (Oct. 1004-Oct. 1005) and crossed the mighty river Indus near Isakhel. Going deeper, he marched up through Khushab and Shahpur, crossed over to the eastern bank of the River Jhelum and captured Bhera, near the famous Salt Range area. This was to be his central position for future actions to the north and north-east if the Shahi Raja raised his head, and to the south-east for "Holy war" against the Carmathians of Multan. Mahmud had no plans to go deep into India and it appears that he was, at that time, only protecting his kingdom and his faith, as desired by the Abbasid Caliph, Al-Qadir Billah. Even after the fall of Multan, he paid very little attention to central and lower Sind until much later, when the Jats annoyed him in the extreme and they had to be punished.

Finding that all opposition had melted away before him Mahmud quit Ghazni with a sizeable patrolling force in late autumn, entered India, and returned in late spring, well before the heat of summer and the rainy season. He made special preparations for his next important expedition to hunt the heretic Qaramita (Carmathians) of Multan. If we read *Kitab -i-Yamini* of Utbi, translated by Rev. James Reynolds, published as *Historical Memoirs of Amir Subuktigin & Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, 1858, p. 326-327, we see the venom and anger of Mahmud against Abul Fateh Daud, but not against Shahi Raja Anandpal. "Abul Fateh, Prince of Multan, was notoriously characterized as one of malignant craftiness, deceitful treachery, dubious fidelity, and detestable inclination. At this point Mahmud sought God's direction, and raised the cry 'To Multan', Jihad against the assassins". We have seen earlier that the Qaramita had established themselves in Multan in AD 965. The ruler there in AH 396 and 397/AD late 1005, and Sept. 1006-17 Sept. 1007, was Abul Fateh Daud, who had shut down the old mosque and was using a new one built by Qaramita Dai, reading the Khutba in the name of the Fatimid caliph. Daud, in desperation, solicited help from Shahi Raja Anandpal, who assured him that he would join the "confederacy against Mahmud" and would block the progress of Mahmud's attacks. Mahmud was now well familiar with the land across the Indus and was also a master of battle tactics - he dealt a quick blow to the regiments sent by Anandpal before they could join up with Daud, and then easily reached Multan and besieged it. Isolated, meek Daud at once sued for peace. Professor Mohammad Habib, late Professor of History and Politics, Muslim University, Aligarh, writes in his book *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, A Study*, p 23, that "Mahmud was on a Holy Campaign (meaning Jihad) against two enemies, an aggressive infidel and a heretic assassin". Another very well informed historian, Suhail Zaheer Lari in *A History of Sind* (Oxford 1994), p. 43, writes "Sultan Mahmud had earned the gratitude of the Orthodox Muslims and the title of Yamin al-Daula (the right hand of the caliphate) from the Abbasid caliph by waging a pious war against the Ismailis in Khurasan". Obviously after that pious war or "Jihad in Persia", Mahmud had embarked on "Jihad in Al-Hind" to distinguish it as a separate expedition in a completely opposite direction, Al-Hind. Fighting Jaipal and his son, Anandpal, was Mahmud's political dictate, not a religious war, as we observe that he had let go Jaipal honourably after combat with him; it was not his Jihad. Mahmud was in no mood for peace with his and God's archenemy, leader of the Assassins, Abul Fateh Daud. Qaramita Ismailis were massacred by Mahmud. Unfortunate news then arrived that Ilak Khan (the Qarakhanid ruler of Kashgar) had invaded Mahmud's northern territories in Khorasan and Balkh. Reluctantly, Mahmud agreed to halt his campaign and marched back in haste to defeat the Qarakhanids. Qasim Firishta says that a heavy annual tribute of 20,000 gold Dinars was fixed on Daud, a huge amount of gold and silver was tendered, with a promise of implicit obedience and abstinence from Carmathian heresy in future.

It is obvious from the chronology of events that the gold dinar was issued after this holy campaign of Sultan Mahmud in "Bilad Dar al-Jihad Hind", bearing the date AH 397. It can also be easily concluded that Mahmud would not have carried uncoined gold; he would rather have acquired it in captured areas. Also, to get a die

made in Arabic script and to issue a good-looking centrally stamped gold coin in his name, Mahmud had to be in a reasonably sized town where he was carrying out his "Holy campaign" - that would be Multan. The central smaller circle, reminiscent of that found on many Fatimid coins, suggests that the die-engraver was familiar with such coins. This splendid gold coin, the weight of which approximated to the Indian tola, must have been sent to the court of the Abbasid caliph to celebrate Mahmud's glorious achievements of Jihad in Al-Hind country. (Earlier coins from this area in the name of Fatimid Caliphs Al-Mu'izz, al-'Aziz and Al-Hakim have been reported).

Mahmud returned home to tackle affairs there, leaving his Indian territory in the charge of young 'Newasa Shah', a grandson (Newasa), or nephew of Raja Jaipal, by the name of Sukhpal, who had become a Muslim and was bestowed with lots of kindness by Mahmud. This act of Mahmud again verifies the fact that he was not considering any more expeditions until later events forced him to do so. This young convert, Newasa Shah, later betrayed Mahmud's trust, and apostatised. Mahmud struck him with such rapidity that the offender was quickly arrested and imprisoned in Ghazni, where he died. Mahmud spent AH 399 (Sept. 1008-Aug. 1009) chastising the Gakkhars and taking Nagarkot. Troubles do not come alone; the year AH 401/AD 1010 came with the unwelcome news that the ruler of Multan, Daud, had also reverted to the Qaramita heresy. Mahmud struck hard again, captured Daud and imprisoned him in Ghazni until he took his last breath. Abu Rehan Al-Beruni joined Mahmud's court in AD 1017 and wrote his world famous book *Kitab Al-Hind* after spending years in this very area of Al-Hind: Multan, Upper Sind, Uch, Bhera, Jhelum, Lahore, and Sialkot.

With this study, we hope we have been able to determine the background to, reasons for and place of minting of the Umayyad-style silver dirham in Al-Hind, and of the commemorative gold dinar of Mahmud of Ghazni in 'Bilad Dar al-Jihad Hind'.

SHIHAB AL-DIN BAYAZID'S ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF BENGAL

By S. M. Iftekhar Alam

After the death of Ghiyath al-Din A'zam Shah in AH 813, his son, Saif al-Din Hamzah Shah became the ruler of the Bengal sultanate. But this new monarch's days did not pass smoothly as Raja Ganesha, also known as Raja Kans, was plotting a conspiracy against him and finally he (Hamzah) became a victim of his (Ganesha's) intrigues. Eventually Hamzah was dethroned and Shihab al-Din Bayazid Shah became the new sultan of Bengal. Regarding this change of power Abdul Karim¹ says "But Hamzah Shah could not rule for long because, through the conspiracy of Ganesha the sultan's slave, Shihab al-Din killed him and ascended the throne." And Mohar Ali² states "The latter (i.e. Raja Kans) succeeded however in removing or killing Hamzah Shah, most probably in the same year (AH 814). Kans was not allowed to have his way without a struggle. Shihab al-Din, a mamluk slave of Hamzah Shah, led a revolt against Kans and for a time succeeded in confining him and eclipsing his authority. Shihab then assumed the title of sultan and issued coins in his name from both Firuzabad and Satgaon."

So, we can see that Abdul Karim suggests that, during this change-over of power, Hamzah was killed, whereas Mohar Ali mentions that Hamzah was either killed or removed, which most probably took place in AH 814. Now to know the real fate of Hamzah, let us analyse the coins of Hamzah and Bayazid issued from different Bengal mints.

Hamzah Shah's coins:

Firuzabad: AH 813 and 814 (type B265 of *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates* by Stan Goron and JP Goenka and henceforth denoted by G&G) – 1 type only.

Satgaon: AH 813 (types B270 & B271 of G&G) – 2 types.

Mu'azzamabad: AH 814 & 815 (types B266, B267, B268, B269, B269A, B272, B273, B275 & B276 of G&G) – 9 types.

Bayazid Shah's coins:

Firuzabad: AH 814 (coin 1, 2 & 3), AH 815, 816 & 817 (types B280, B281, B282, B283 & B284 of G&G) – 7 types (including 2 new types dated AH 814).

Satgaon: AH 815, 816³ & 817 (types B288, B289, B290 & B294⁴ of G&G) – 4 types.

Mu'azzamabad: No date found yet (types B285, B286 & B287) – 3 types.

No Mint (Mintless Type): Jamadi II, AH 814 (Coins 4 & 5); 816 & 817 (B291 of G&G); Sha'ban 817 (B292 of G&G).

Description of the coins of Bayazid dated AH 814

Coin 1



Coin 1

Metal: gold, wt: 10.6g, size: 24 mm.

Obv.: Legends in 5 lines within a circle:

شهاب
الدنيا و الدين
ابو المظفر
بايزيد شاه
السلطان

Rev.: Kalimah Tayyibah within a square.

Marginal legends (anti-clockwise) in reverse outside kalimah:

Top: - ضرب Left: الفيروز Bottom: اباد سنة Right: ٨١٤

This unique gold coin dated 814 from the mint in the capital may have been issued by Bayazid during his coronation in AH 814.

Coin 2



Coin 2

This silver tanka belongs to the known type of B280 of G&G and the margin can be read as :

ضرب --- سنة اربع عشر (و) ثمانمائة

So, this Firuzabad type coin was issued in AH 814.

Coin 3



This silver tanka has the following obverse and reverse legends.

Obv. :

المؤيد بتأيد
الرحمن شهاب
الدنيا و الدين
ابو المظفر بايزيد
شاه السلطان

Rev.

ناصر امير المؤمنين
غوٲ الاسلام
و المسلمين
خلد ملكه

Reverse margin: Between 2 o'clock and 6 o'clock the date is written as سنة ٨١٤

Though the mint is not visible, stylistically this belongs to type B280 of G&G from Firuzabad mint. So, this coin 3 was struck from Firuzabad mint in AH 814.

Coins 2 and 3 both belonging to type B280 of G&G have the same date of AH 814 written in letters and in numerals respectively.

Coin 4



This silver tanka has the following obverse and reverse legends.

Obv.: Legends in 4 lines in a circle:

المؤيد بتأيد الرحمن
شهاب الدنيا و الدين
ابو المظفر بايزيد
شاه السلطان

Rev.: Legends in 4 lines within a square:

ناصر امير المؤمنين
غوٲ الاسلام
و المسلمين
خلد ملكه

Reverse margin (clockwise): Top: جمادى الاخر Right: اربع --
Bottom: عشر Left: وثمانائة

The most probable word before اربع is سنة in the right segment of reverse margin. So, this coin was issued in AH 814 in the month of Jamadi II, the 6th month of the Arabic year.

Coin 5



This is the same as coin 4 but both obverse and reverse are from different dies. The word "four" of the date is very clear in coin 5.

Coins 6 and 7

These belong to type B289 of G&G.



Reverse margins of these coins have legends as follows:

ستكانو سنة ستة عشر و
عرصة ستكانو سنة
and

respectively.

So, from Coin 6 and Coin 7 we find that type B289 of G&G was struck at 'Arsah Satgaon and we also get a date of (8)16 in Coin 6.

Coin 8



Coin 8 belonging to type B294 of G&G bears the mint name 'Arsah Satgaon in the reverse margin between 7 and 11 o'clock.

Of all the coins of Hamzah that have come to light so far, we do not see any from Firuzabad or Satgaon after AH 814 but, from Mu'azzamabad, Hamzah issued 9 different types of coins whereas Bayazid's coins from the same mint are known in 3 types only (B285, B286 & B287 of G&G). These types must have been issued by Bayazid from Mu'azzamabad between AH 815 and 817. Though no date could be found on any of these coins, if we do find any on future specimens then it should be anything between AH 815, this being the earliest possible, and 817, this being the latest.

All these coins of Hamzah and Bayazid give us the clear idea that Bayazid assumed power in Bengal in the 6th month, if not earlier, of AH 814 by removing Hamzah. However, Hamzah managed to keep his grip on Mu'azzamabad and continued to rule

this eastern part of Bengal at least up to some part of 815. This is the reason why we see the highest number of types of coins of Hamzah struck from Mu'azzamabad and the lowest number of types from Firuzabad, the capital, and Satgaon, the western part of the Bengal Sultanate.

So, we can safely conclude from the evidence of coins of these two sultans, especially from 3 types of coins of Bayazid including a gold tanka all issued in 814 (two types from Firuzabad, the capital and one mintless type) that Hamzah was ousted (not killed) from the capital, Firuzabad and Bayazid Shah ascended the throne of Bengal no later than the 6th month of 814. Hamzah fled to Mu'azzamabad and managed to rule this eastern part of Bengal at least for some months during 815. However, the discovery of clear dates on future coins of Hamzah or Bayazid from Mu'azzamabad may determine whether Hamzah ruled Mu'azzamabad beyond 815 or not. For now, in regard to possession and control of the capital, the period of reign of these two kings over the Bengal Sultanate can be revised as Saif al-Din Hamzah Shah, AH 813-814 (AD 1410-1411) and Shihab al-Din Bayazid Shah, AH 814-817 (AD 1411-1414).

Notes & references

1. Professor Abdul Karim, *Banglar Itihash* (Sultani Amal), reprint, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, 1993, p-210.
2. Muhammad Mohar Ali, *History of the Muslims of Bengal*, vol IA, Imam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud Islamic University, Riyadh 1985, p-147.
3. See coin 6.
4. See coin 8 from 'Arsah Satgaon which can be assigned to type B294 of G&G.
5. Thanks to Mr J P Goenka for the images of coin 3 and coin 4.

A RARE SEAL OF HAMIDA BANU BEGUM

By Sanjay Garg

In the collection of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin is a manuscript copy of the *Divan* of the Persian poet, Aga Malik ibn Jamal ud-Din Amir Shahi (d. AH 857/ AD 1453). This copy was earlier in the collection of the Safavid ruler, Shah Abbas I, and later passed into the imperial library of the Mughals. On folio 3b of this manuscript there are 10 seals, one of which is ascribed to Hamida Banu Begum (1527–1604), second wife of Humayun and mother of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar (Figs. 1 and 2). Styled as 'Maryam Makani' [Dweller in the House of Mary] after her death, she enjoyed a place of prominence in the imperial household throughout his life.



Fig. 1: Portrait of Hamida Banu Begum, holding a seal. Illustrated folio from the 'Anthology of Mir Ali', c. AD 1550. Persian School. Gouache on paper.

Image source:

http://www.zazzle.co.uk/portrait_of_hamida_banu_begum_holding_a_seal

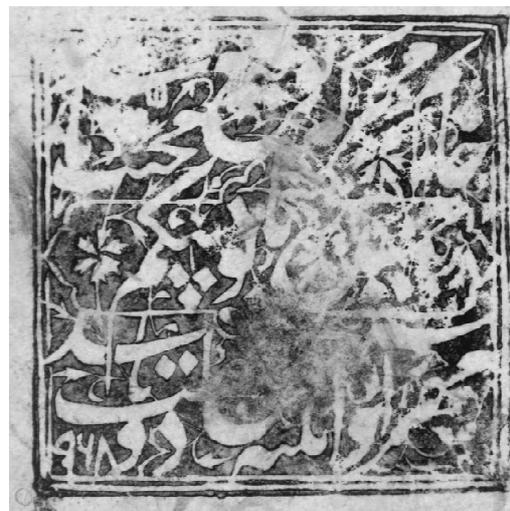
_ill_canvas-192153385596411687 (Last accessed 9 July 2014). National Museum, New Delhi collection(?)².



Fig. 2: Young Akbar recognises his Mother (Hamida Banu Begum). Illustrated folio from Akbarnama, attributed to Madhava, c. 1596–1600 CE. Opaque watercolour, ink, and gold on paper.

Image courtesy: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Purchase: F1939.57)

The description of Hamida Bano Begam's seal found on the *Divan* of Shahi (Fig. 3), is as follows:



نام مھر کہ توفیق محبت باشد
[حمیدہ] بانوبیگم

شد مھراورا [چون] نگینہ دولت باشد ۹۶۸

khātim-i muhr ke tawfīq-e muhabbat bāshad,

In a cartouche: *[hamīdah] bānū bēgam*

shud muhr ū rā [chū]n nagīna-e daulat bāshad. 968

[This] terminal seal has become a gift of love,
[Hamida] Banu Begum

² Despite my diligent enquiries from the authorities of the National Museum, New Delhi, for over a year, I could not elicit any confirmation if this miniature painting is indeed from their collection. Since this image (Hamida Banu holding a seal), is of direct relevance to this study, I have included here the image that is already available in the public domain though without any formal confirmation/ permission from the National Museum, New Delhi.

As her stamp has become the jewel of the State. AH 968 [1560/61 CE]

Figure 3: Seal of Hamida Banu Begam

Ref.: Wright 2008: 220-21.

Image Source: Islamic Seal Database, No. 170, CBL, Per 257, f. 1a. For a high resolution image of the seal, please see the following link:

<http://www.cbl.ie/islamicseals/View-Seals/170.aspx>

(Last accessed 9 July 2014). Image Courtesy: © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

Another, a bit clearer, impression of the same seal appears on a manuscript copy of the *Khamsa* of the Persian poet, Mir Ali Sher Nawai, (folio 1a), in the collection of the Royal Library, Windsor (Acc. No.: RCIN 1005032), (Seyller 1997: p. 259, fig. 6).³

This seal provides one of the earliest examples of the use of a Persian verse on the seals of the Mughals.

The Chester Beatty Library Database gives the legend as follows:

خاتم مهر که توفیق محبت باشد

حمیده بانو بیگم

مهر او آیینہ؟... دولت باشد

khātim-i muhr ke tawfiq-e muhabbat bāshad,

hamīdah bānū bēgam

shud muhr ū aaina [?].... daulat bāshad.

Amongst the royal ladies of the Mughal Empire who played a key role in the politics, the name of Hamida Banu Begam comes first. In 1541, when she was only 13, she was married to Humayun, thus becoming his second wife. Next year, at Umarkot, she gave birth to the future Mughal emperor, Akbar. During the tutelage of Akbar, she helped him in the affairs of the State, and also engineered the ouster of his mentor, Bairam Khan in AH 968 (1560/61 CE), as soon as her son came of age. Interestingly, this seal is also dated AH 968 (1560/61 CE), which suggests that Hamida Banu Begam saw an important role for herself in the state administration. The words on the seal too are indicative of such an inference.

Later when Prince Salim revolted against his Hamida Banu sided with her grandson, and managed a royal pardon for him.

Hamida Banu Begam died on 29 August 1604 in Agra, and was buried at the Humayun's Tomb in Delhi. Throughout her life Akbar always held her in high esteem. It is said that he had himself carried her palanquin across the river during one of her journeys from Lahore to Agra and that he tonsured his head only on two occasions, one at the death of foster-mother Maham Anga and another at the death of his mother.

References:

Seyller, John, 'The Inspection and Valuation of Manuscripts in the Imperial Mughal Library', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 57, Nos. 3/4, (1997), pp. 243-349.

Wright, Elaine, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library*, (Art Services International: Alexandria, Virginia, 2008).

THE DISCOVERY OF A RUPEE OF THE MUGHAL CLAIMANT, NIKUSIYAR, REVISITED.

By Jan Lingen

In JONS no. 207 (Spring 2011) Dr Munaf Billoo and I published the discovery of a rupee of Nikusiyar. It was at that time the first and only numismatic testimony of the rule of Nikusiyar for which so many numismatics and historians had been looking for so long.



Fig. 1: The original published coin

The rupee concerned showed quite a bit of encrustation, particular on the obverse, which made it difficult to read the complete legend on the coin. After careful study of the available image we came to read the couplet as follows:

Obv.:

*Sikkah zad bar sīm-o-zar
Be-faḡl khudā shāh nīkūsiyar*

(Struck coin on silver and gold /
by the grace of God, Shah Nikusiyar)

Rev.:

*Mānūs maimanat jalūs aḡd,
Zarb mustaqir al-khilafat akbarābād*

The couplet on this coin is very unusual as it uses the word *Khuda* (God) instead of *Allah* and differs entirely from the *Bait* given by Khafi Khan, who provides the following legend:

*Ba zar zad sikkah sahib-qirani
Shah nikusiyar timur-sani*

(Struck coin on gold like the Sahibqiran /
Shah Nikusiyar, Timur the second.)

In the 'Editor's note' at the end of the article, he expressed a word of caution regarding the published coin. One of his arguments "Moreover, the reverse has the mintname at the bottom, like the coins of Farrukhsiyar, while the coins of all other rulers shown, including Rafi'al-Darjat whose reign commenced before that of Nikusiyar, has the mintname at the top" is, however, not justifiable any longer as a rupee of Rafi'al-Darjat with the mintname at the bottom appeared in Bhargava Auction No.1 (Mumbai, 5 October 2012) lot 40. www.bhargavaauctions.com



Fig. 2: Rupee of Rafi' al-Darjat of Akbarabad

More recently there was a lengthy discussion on the Facebook Group 'Mughal coins of India', during which contributors put forward views for and against the likely authenticity of the Nikusiyar rupee. One of the problems was that the coin had a lot of accretions that prevented the legend from being seen properly. The part of the legend that could be seen was totally

³ I could not obtain an image of the said seal because of the prohibitive rates for supplying a digital copy demanded by the Royal Collection Trust.

different from the one quoted in William Irvine's *Later Mughals* as having been used on Nikusiyar's coins. Moreover, the phrase *ba-fazal-i-khuda* was one that occurred on no other Mughal coin. It was also noted that what could be seen of the the coin's couplet did not scan properly in terms of its metre.

On the other hand, the unusual nature of the legend could have been due to the historical circumstances, namely the fact that the prime instigator of Nikusiyar's enthronement was Mitr Sen, a Nagar Brahman, who was raised to the rank of commander and the office of Wazir. When, on 2 August 1719, the garrison surrendered, Nikusiyar was brought out and placed on an elephant and escorted to the camp, but Mitr Sen had made an end of himself by plunging a dagger into his own breast, before the imperial soldiers could seize him. Anything could be expected under such circumstances.

Besides, the fact that the coin had a different couplet from the one mentioned by Khafi Khan could be in its favour. If a forger wanted to make a coin in Nikusiyar's name, he would be more likely to use the published couplet rather than a completely different one. As for what appeared to be a faulty poetic metre, that could simply be due to the fact that the coin's couplet was not necessarily completely visible or legible on the coin.

All these considerations became purely academic when a second and much clearer specimen of this issue came to light. We are very grateful for the the illustration below from a personal photo-archive.



Fig. 3: The second example of the Nikusiyar rupee, weight: 11.27g, 23 mm.

The present high resolution image is, as can be observed, of a well circulated rupee with scratches and typical shroff-marks, commonly seen on Mughal and Native States coins. It is in no way tooled or otherwise manipulated.

With the surfacing of this second specimen, which is in all respects contemporary and authentic, the caution expressed earlier following the initial discovery can now be safely set aside. The second coin seems to be die-identical to the first published specimen as shown above. On this second specimen the full legend can now be read more satisfactorily, and differs slightly from what was earlier presumed by us, as a part of the legend on the initial coin was rather obscured by a thick layer of encrustation. Sanjay Garg, kindly had a look at the couplet on the obverse, and suggests the following reading:

*Dar āfāq sikka zad bar sīm-o-zar,
Ba-fazl-e khudā, shāh nekūsiyar.*

(On the horizons struck coin on silver and gold,
By the grace of the Almighty, King Nekusiyar.)

The uniqueness of the legend, which was argued about in the Facebook discussion, nevertheless remains. Also the error in the 'shosha' of the 'k' in the mint-name Akbarabad seems to have been a die-cutter's error and no basis to condemn the issue as a possible work of a forger.

With the discovery of this second specimen of the Mughal claimant, Nikusiyar, all doubts about its authenticity should now be dispelled, despite some of its oddities pointed out by Shailendra Bhandare, based on the first discovered specimen.

We may still conclude that this is a very important discovery for Mughal numismatics. After almost 300 years, two specimens have now surfaced for the first time.

THE SILVER RUPEES OF FATH SHAH OF GARHWAL REVISITED

By Shailendra Bhandare

In the supplement to ONSNL-161, published in 1999, the late Nick Rhodes brought to light two silver coins of Fath Shah, the ruler of Garhwal (1665-1716) – one a rupee and the other a quarter rupee, both bearing the same inscription. Nick illustrated both coins only as a line-drawing. As regards to the legends, he described them as -

Obv: ...*sikka az dahr zad chu mohr 'inayat (?) Sri Maharaja Fath Shah zaman*; 29 in field

Rev: *darb Srinagar, sanat 1750 (?) Sri Badrinath...*

He further commented – "Part of the legends on both sides is off the coin and therefore it has not been possible to determine the full legend, which is probably a Persian couplet. The word at the top of the reverse probably rhymes with zaman. The coin appears to be dated in the Vikram Samvat era, so it seems to have been struck in AD 1693. The mint is Srinagar, the capital of Garhwal..."



Fig. 1

The mystery of what exactly the legends are was solved when another piece appeared recently on the Indian market, and was offered at Classical Numismatic Gallery (Ahmedabad) Auction 18, 16th August 2014, lot 304. The coin weighs 11.41 g. (Fig. 1) and shows the legends on both sides well enough to make a complete reading:

Obv: from bottom to top

sikka dar dahr zad chū mihr 'ayān shrī mahārājah fath shāh zamān

سکه در دهر زد چو مهر عیان شری مها راجه فتنشاه زمان

With the right 'izafats' (linking particle) added to make the 'weight' of the couplet metrically accurate, this would need to be written and recited as –

sikkā dar dahr zad chū mihr-i-'ayān shrī mahārājah-i fath shāh-i-zamān

Meaning – "Fath Shah, the Maharaja of the World, struck coin in the Universe like an evident Sun", or adjusting for poetic license, "The coin struck by Fath Shah, the Maharaja of the World, (which) is evidently like the Sun within the Universe".

The figure '29' is placed in the centre of the coin, below the word *mahā*.

Rev: from bottom to top

zarb shrīnagar sanat (1)750 badarīnāth sahāi

ضرب شری نگر سنت ۱۷۵۰ شری بدری ناتھ سہای

This can be translated as - "Struck at Shrinagar (in the) year 1750 – (O) Badareenath, assist!"

The name 'Badareenath' alludes to the Hindu (Vaishnava) holy shrine of Badrinath, located in the Himalayan ranges north of Garhwal. As noted by Nick in his 1999 paper, it "is of great

interest, and is reminiscent of the Sanskrit legend on the octagonal rupee, which has been translated as [the coin] shines in the world by the grace of Badarinatha". This octagonal rupee is in the collection of Jan Lingen and was published by John Deyell in Numismatic Digest, vol. VII, 1983 ("Commemorative Rupee of Fateh Shah of Garhwal", pp. 87-91). It bears Devanagari legends, in Sanskrit verse meter named *Anushubh*. They were commented upon by the editors of the Digest and correctly amended. The same is also listed on 'Zeno', the web-based Oriental coin database (www.zeno.ru) as #137635. An aspect of this coin, which was missed by the original publisher/commentators, as well as its description on 'Zeno', is discussed further in this paper.

As regards the historicity of Fath Shah, Nick mentioned several sources in his paper, namely *History of Garhwal* by A S Rawat (New Delhi 1989) and colonial sources like H G Walton's *Garhwal Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1910) and G R C Williams' *Historical and Statistical Memoir of Dehra Doon* (Roorkee, 1984). However, in the years since the publication of Nick's paper, a more comprehensive publication, titled *Garhwal Himalaya: A Study in Historical Perspective* by Ajay S Rawat has appeared (New Delhi, 2002). The information produced hereunder is taken largely from this book (pp. 45-56).

The date of Fath Shah's accession had been a matter of some controversy (vide Deyell, who states he ascended the throne in 1684) but Rawat demonstrates convincingly that he succeeded his grandfather, Prithvipat Shah, in 1665, his father, Medini Shah, having predeceased him. It is apparent that Prithvipat Shah abdicated in favour of his grandson and was alive for a few years into his reign. Irrefutable evidence of Mughal documents – one a letter informing Prithvipat of his son Medini's death and the other a charter or *firman*, issued by Aurangzeb in 1665, acknowledging his succession (Rawat 2002: 47) is available to confirm this. This date has a direct bearing on the dates on our silver rupee, because VS 1750 mentioned on the reverse of the coin would correspond to AD 1692 and the figure '29' on the obverse of the coin confirms this as the RY of Fath Shah, counted from 1665.

Fath Shah's political strength appears to have grown considerably in the late 1680's. Perhaps emboldened by the absence of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in the Deccan, he undertook several campaigns from his base in Garhwal. He surely emerged as a great warrior and a powerful ruler in the northern foothills of the Himalayas. He managed to antagonize several other kingdoms in the region through his aggression, some of the rulers of which, like the Rajas of Sirmoor and Kumaon had been traditional rivals of Garhwal. A significant event resulting from these regional skirmishes, campaigns and politics was the battle between Fath Shah and the Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, which took place in September 1688, at Bhangani, near Paonta, where the Guru had been in residence (now a major Sikh pilgrimage centre, addressed reverentially as 'Paonta Sahib'). There are various versions of how and why the battle took place but this discussion is beyond the remit of this note. Suffice it to say, the battle marks an interesting prelude to the growing ambitions and power of Fath Shah, even though his army received a setback at Bhangani.

The next important campaign of Fath Shah's reign was a raid on Saharanpur which he launched in 1692, the very year in which our coin was struck. Sayyid 'Ali, the Mughal garrison-commander at Saharanpur was able to repulse this invasion with great difficulty. Rawat quotes G R C William to attribute the founding of a town named 'Fathpur' in Haraura Pargana by Fath Shah as a result of this campaign (Rawat 2002: 50).

Fath Shah's relations with the neighbouring kingdom of Kumaon were fraught with constant tension. The Garhwalis and the Kumaonis repeatedly raided each other's territories. Rajas Gyan Chand and Jagat Chand of Kumaon were main adversaries of Fath Shah. During Gyan Chand's reign, the Garhwalis secured a major victory over the Kumaonis in 1701, when they overran Chaukot and Giwar (Rawat 2002: 53).

Fath Shah was a great patron of art and literature. Prior to Fath Shah's ascension, the Mughal Prince Suleiman Shikoh (son of Dara Shikoh) took refuge at his grandfather's court. Two painters, who accompanied him, are proposed as becoming the forerunners

of the 'Garhwali School' of miniature painting under Fath Shah's patronage. Much in the tradition of great patrons like Chandra Gupta II or Akbar, he is also known to have patronised an assemblage of illustrious persons, alluded to as the 'Nine Jewels' or *Navaratna* in his court. Poets and eulogists were patronised too - Ratan Kavi (a.k.a. Kshem Ram) wrote a paean named 'Fath Prakash' to his rule and Kaviraj Sukhdev Misra, in his 'Vritta Vichara' praised Fath Shah's gallantry.

Fath Shah is known to have left a number of dedicatory copperplate inscriptions. Some of them note endowments to monasteries and temples belonging to the 'Nath' sect. Rawat (2002: 55) alludes to one of them as being important in determining the year in which Fath Shah's reign ended as 1715.

Returning to his coins – it is evident that the silver issues of Fath Shah are very rare, known in each type only by one or two specimens. This has led both John Deyell and Nick Rhodes to suggest that they were in all likelihood, commemorative pieces, struck to mark significant events. As we know that his attack against the Mughal garrison of Saharanpur happened in 1692, we can be almost certain that this was the reason he struck Mughal-style silver coins. Although Fath Shah and the kingdom of Garhwal are understood to have nominally been under Mughal sovereignty, there is no detail of an economic basis (like an annual tribute paid) for this alleged subservience. Rhodes' view that these coins "may have been a conscious demonstration of independence" and "a political statement" is perhaps reading too much into their history. The fact that they are in Mughal style is indeed an act of great defiance and we, therefore, concur with Rhodes' further statement, that "... Fath Shah, presumably felt that the modest economic benefits of the coinage did not warrant the risk of incurring the Emperor's future wrath, so he did not continue the coinage."

This brings us to the other, presumably also commemorative, rupee of Fath Shah – the octagonal rupee published by John Deyell (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2

The legends on the coin were amended from what Deyell wrote in his text to be:

Obv:

मेदिनीशाह सूनो श्री फतेशाहावनीपते:

Médinīshāh soono Shri Faté Shāhā vanīpatéḥ

Rev:

बदरीनाथ कृपया मुद्रा जगति राजते १७५७

Badarīnāth Kṛpayā Mudrā Jagatī Rājaté 1757

Taken together, both the inscriptions mean - "The coin (struck) by the illustrious Fath Shah, Lord of the Earth, the son of Medini Shah, by the grace of Badarinath, rules in the World".

The date 1757 was reckoned to be in VS and would thus correspond to AD 1700; the year is close enough to mark either Fath Shah's campaign against Kumaon, or a victory he secured against the kingdom. A significant aspect which Deyell and the commentators missed is that there are evident traces of the number '35' just after the obverse inscription (Fig. 3a, 3b).



Figs. 3a, 3b

This number could only be representative of Fath Shah's regnal year counted from 1665, which corresponds clearly with VS 1757 borne on the other side of the coin (AD 1665 + 35 = AD 1700 = VS 1757). It is noteworthy that, amongst the copperplate grants Rawat mentions (Rawat 2002: 55), there is one which makes a grant to the Rajarajeshwari Temple, located in Dewalgarh *Mandal* (administrative subdivision), that is dated in this precise VS year. It is therefore likely that the year marks a series of commemorations, facilitated through the striking of special coins, and awards of grants to the temples in Fath Shah's domains.

The other interesting aspect of this coin, noted by the Editor in his comments on Deyell's article, is its curious shape and the metrical legends. While it is tempting for numismatists to suppose a connection with the familiar octagonal coins of Assam, the Editor proposed that the shape and the language and poetics of the inscription has close similarity with Maratha seals, particularly those of Shivaji. Shivaji crowned himself as an independent ruler in AD 1674, but he is known to have used an octagonal seal with Sanskrit verse inscription from a date as early as 1645. In the legend on the octagonal rupee, words like 'Shah soono' (शाह सूनो 'the Son of Shah', i.e. Shahaji, in Shivaji's case), *Mudrā* (मुद्रा, to mean 'seal' as well as 'coin') and the ending *Rājatē* (राजते, meaning 'is ruling / shining') all find a distinct resonance in Shivaji's seal.

But Shivaji died in 1680 and Garhwal is over 1200 km from the Deccan, Shivaji's homelands, so such a connection would seem inconceivable! However, the information given by Ajay Rawat (2002: 54) about the poets patronised by Fath Shah, mentions a poet by the name of Mati Ram, who, in his work entitled '*Vritta Kaumudi*' also called '*Chhandsar Pingal*', compared Fath Shah's generosity with that of Shivaji. A poet named Bhushan features in the preamble of a panegyric 'Fath Prakash' of Ratan Kavi. He is well-known to students of Maratha history as the writer of paeans to Shivaji named *Shivarāja-Bhūshan* and *Shivā-Bāwani*.

So there appears to be a 'poetic connection' between Shivaji and Fath Shah, brought about through patronage and circulation of poets. It was perhaps augmented by the fact that both were staunch adversaries of the Mughals and had other common ground like being overlords of mountainous kingdoms, militarily favouring a 'guerrilla' kind of warfare and creating their own 'kingdoms' or 'proto-nations' in terms of their political careers – similarities which the poets must have picked up in their eulogistic creations. The contention that the octagonal rupee was inspired by Shivaji's seal is, therefore, not as far-fetched as it may sound.

A HEAVY SIKH RUPEE OF PATIALA

By Jeevandeep Singh

Patiala was the principal state in the Cis-Sutlej region of Punjab and was ruled by descendants of Phulkian Misl of the Dal Khalsa or Sikh Military confederation. It was founded by Ala Singh, who was granted the governorship of Sahrind by Ahmed Shah Durrani in 1765.

The circulation coinage of Patiala was struck in the name of Ahmed Shah Durrani starting AH 1178, and continued till its merger with the Indian Republic, but for the personal use of the Royal family it minted special coins with a Gobindshahi couplet for religious use and for donation to shrines during festivities.

The issuing of these coins started upon the demise of the Sikh Empire in 1849, with the first coin being issued by Maharaja Narinder Singh in VS 1906 with the Gobindshahi couplet on the Obverse.



The couplet is:

*Deg Teg Fateh, Nusrat Bedarang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh
Food, Sword, Victory and infinite assistance
received by the grace of the Guru's from Nanak to Gobind Singh*

Hans Herrli, in his book *Coins of the Sikhs*, has listed Gobindshahi coins of Narinder Singh, Bhupinder Singh and Yadwinder Singh.



Bhupinder Singh, Gobindshahi Rupee, vs 1958



Yadwinder Singh, Gobindshahi Rupee, vs 1994

In a numismatic auction in 2013, Stephen Album Auctions, Auction 19, a Gobindshahi rupee of Maharaja Rajinder Singh was listed. The coin is:



A Gobindshahi rupee of his predecessor, Maharaja Mahinder Singh, was recently found. The coin is:



The weight of this coin is 11.98g, which is as per the full 'tola' weight standard. A generic study of these rare coins shows slight weight variations. Mostly only a single specimen was available to compare the weights of the coins of different rulers.

| | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Narinder Singh | VS1906 | 11.52g |
| | VS1909 | 11.30g |
| Mahinder Singh | | 11.98g |
| Rajinder Singh | | 11.78g |
| Bhupinder Singh | VS1958 | 11.60g |
| Yadwinder Singh | VS1994 | 11.40g |

The weight of the coin of Mahinder Singh is anomalous and could have been due to religious requirements rather than a change of weight standard. As per tradition, objects of religious use are discarded, if cut or broken, hence perhaps the flans of these coins were made with approximations and not corrected for weight differences.

With the discovery of the Gobindshahi rupee of Maharaja Mahinder Singh, a complete series of these coins is seen right from vs 1906 to 1994, during which period these were minted in a limited number during the festivities for token usage by the royal family.

THE INTRODUCTION OF MACHINE-MADE COPPER COINS INTO THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY – THE CHALLENGE OF LOCAL MINTS

By Dr Paul Stevens

Introduction

During the 1820s, steam-driven machinery was introduced into a new mint at Bombay with the intention that this new mint would have the capacity to provide for all of the currency needs of the Presidency.

The new mint started operations on 22 November 1830, with the first coins being quarter annas, followed by twelfth annas in 1831. The coins were announced by proclamation in November 1830¹.

However, the new copper coins were lighter than the pre-existing coins and were, in effect, a token currency. This caused considerable problems in getting the coins accepted by the local populace. In addition, several local rulers outside of the Presidency itself had copper mints, and coins from these mints were imported into the Presidency and created an even greater barrier to the acceptance of the new machine-made coins. The records reveal some interesting facts about these local native mints and this paper examines these archival sources and the challenges that had to be overcome from this source in order to get the new copper coinage into circulation.

Local Native Mints in the Deccan



In 1831 the Junior Principal Collector of Poona reported his worries about local mints striking copper coins²:

In reference to your circular of the 27th ultimo on the subject of introducing the new currency into this Presidency, I have the

honor to bring to the notice of the Right Honble the Governor that some measures probably should be adopted to prevent the Punt Suchen at Bhore and His Highness the Rajah of Sattarah and other places coining pice which we shall be unable to prevent coming into our districts as the stamp on each is the same as that used in the Poona mint and consequently our district treasuries will continue receiving the coins as that of our own manufacture. It appears that so long as the Poona mint continued to coin copper, none was coined either at Bhore or Sattara. I understand that they are just about to commence at both places and a consignment of copper has actually left Poonah for that purpose. For two years and upwards they have not coined at Bhore, the capital of the Punt Suchen Territories, and I do not think it would be very severe to prevent him doing so now. At any rate, if the power cannot with justice be withheld, the coin and stamp should be altered to enable us to recognise it from the Company's old currency, and the alteration should be made in the Rajah's states. I beg to suggest however that a letter be sent to the Resident immediately to prevail upon the Rajah either to stop coining altogether in his states, or to limit the same to his own immediate states and mint, if absolutely necessary, which however was put a stop to by the Paishwa, [and] as paramount lord to prevent the Punt Suchen coining at all. He can have no right to do so of himself, nor do I think the Rajah of Sattara has any right as it was stopped by the Paishwa.

The mint at Phluntun should also be stopped and that at Wattar also. These belong to the Nimbalkur. The Rajah I believe has attached these towns and territories at present.

One interesting comment in the above letter is the observation that pice struck at Poona and Sattara were indistinguishable from one another.



Poona/Sattara pice (enlarged)

Another interesting observation from the extract is the number of different mints in operation in the area.

The mint committee supported the proposals of the Collector of Poona in a letter to the Bombay Council dated July 1831³:

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 21st instant with one from the Junior Principal Collector of Poona proposing certain measures for preventing the native chieftains in the Deccan from coining copper pice, and in reply to state for the information of the Right Honble the Governor in Council, that we entirely concur in the Collector's suggestions and accordingly beg to recommend their adoption.

However the Governor was worried about interfering in the affairs of Sattara and wanted to hear the views of the Resident there:

Before we adopt the opinion of the Committee, I should wish to refer the question as stated by the Junior Principal Collector of Poona to the Resident for his opinion. I confess it is to me very doubtful whether we ought to interfere in the internal management of the Rajah of Sattara's administration so far as to prevent his coinage.

The resident at Sattara, accordingly, was asked for his opinion⁴:

I am directed by the Right Honble the Governor in Council to transmit for your opinion the accompanying copy of a letter from the Junior Principal Collector of Poona dated the 11th ultimo, proposing that certain native chieftains in the Deccan be prevented from coining and to call your attention to the suggestion offered by Mr Giberne at the conclusion of the 1st paragraph.

and he replied in September 1831. He believed that the mint controlled by the Raja could be stopped without too much difficulty because the Raja believed that the contractor would default on his contract in some way and the contract could then be ended⁵:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 11th instant and to report for the information of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that there does not seem any objection to order the pice coinage at Bhere, Watar and Fultun immediately to cease and I shall therefore request His Highness to give orders to this effect.

On enquiry I have learnt that the mint at this place has recently been set a going on a contract with a coiner for several years but His Highness does not seem to attach much importance to its continuation though he does not like, without cause, to abrogate the engagement he has come under. He however states there is little doubt a good plea in breach of contract on the part of the contractor will occur in the course of the next three or four months or even before, in attempting to issue pice of an inferior weight or debased metal, and that he will embrace such an opportunity as his agreement authorizes, to suspend further operations.

As this mode of meeting the wishes of the Right Honble the Governor in Council holds out a near prospect of getting rid of the mint altogether, it may not be necessary to require any change in the die in use here for so short a time, especially as the coinage is after all, very limited.

This was forwarded to the Junior Principal Collector at Poona. Meanwhile the junior principal collector at Poona had noticed the arrival of a large quantity of copper coins from the very areas he was most concerned about⁶

I have the honor in reference to my letter of the 11th ultimo to state for the information of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that I have received information that a large consignment of copper pice have been received by the merchants in camp at Poona from the Sattara and Punt Suchen's territory. I should wish to be informed whether immediate steps should not be taken to prevent the supply of copper pice which the foreign mints have and will continue to afford. The pice will find its way into our territory, there can be little doubt, and the only mode I conceive as likely to remedy the evil, is to stop the mint in those territories or to require another stamp to the coin, which I suggested in my letter alluded to above.

I would further request to be instructed whether I am authorized to issue instructions to all the Nakadars to prevent the import of pice into our territories.

Eventually, by October 1831, the resident at Satara was able to report that all the mints in the area had been closed⁷:

I have the honor to reply to your letter dated the 26th of last month concerning the pice mints in the territories of His Highness the Raja and his Jagherdars, to report for the information of the Right Honble the Governor that His Highness by a memorandum No 76 dated 13th instant, has advised me that he has put a stop to the manufacture of pice at this place and has ordered that all the other mints in his territory be closed.

Should the Collector of Poona ascertain therefore that any of them is still clandestinely carried on, I shall on his appraising me of the same, take measures against the offending parties.

Local Native Mints – Bhaunagar

To the North of Bombay there was a mint at Bhaunagar and it was thought that this might cause problems. In 1831 the principal collector at Ahmadabad wrote⁸:



Map of the Gulf of Cambay

I have the honor to bring to the notice of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that the Rajah of Bhownugher has a mint in the town of Bhownugher for coining copper pice and which are sold by him and pass current through the Western Districts.

I called upon the Rajah sometime since on the subject, requesting him to state on what grounds he rested his right to issue coin and beg submit his answers on the point.

I shall feel obliged to your furnishing me with the instruction of the Right Honble the Governor in Council as to what steps should be taken with regard to this mint on the introduction of the new copper coin into those districts, whether the mint should be stopped or merely the coin declared not current in this Zillah

The Thakkur of Bhaunagar had replied to Vibart, in August 1831 with the following letter⁹:

Your letter dated the 14th of [Jestvud] has been duly received and I have understood its contents. You have written that it has been reported to the Sircar that I had established a mint in the town of Bhownugur for coining copper pice and calling upon me to state by whose authority I had done so, from what year and on what right. I beg to state that this mint has not been recently established by me but has been [Coeval?] with the town that the coining of copper pice has been carried on previous to the time of the late Wuckhutsingjee and that according to which, it still continues. The mint has not been established on any new grounds, as the management of the Mehaul of the Bunder has been under my ancestors, so has also that of the mint. I rely on your protection and goodness

These two letters were sent to the mint committee who forwarded them on to the Bombay Government with a covering letter. They were unsure of the politics involved in stopping the mint at Bhaunagar¹⁰:

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant with copy of one from the Principal Collector of Ahmadabad and its enclosures respecting the mint in the town of Bhownuggur, the coins issued from which are current in the Western Districts of the Zillah.

We request that you will bring to the notice of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that it appears to us to be a question depending upon the nature of our political relations with the Rajah of Bhownuggur whether he should be allowed to coin copper or not and if not, whether any compensation should be given him for relinquishing his privilege. It would certainly be

desirable to prevent him coining pice if it can be done without injustice.

Should this however be impracticable or the objections and difficulties be greater than the advantages to be secured, we request you will submit our opinion to His Lordship in Council that the course suggested in para 3 of the extract accompanying the Government Circular of the 27th June last in regard to the coinage of foreign states should be followed.

The revenue commissioner's view was solicited¹¹

In transmitting to you the enclosed copy of a letter from the Mint committee dated the 24th of last month and of the one from the Principal Collector of Ahmadabad therein referred to, I am desired by the Right Honble the Governor to request your opinion on the question therein submitted, regarding the copper coin issuing from the mint at Bhownuggur.

and the revenue commissioner replied in October 1831 stating that he felt sure that the mint could be closed¹²:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th ultimo with enclosure and calling on me for my opinion regarding the copper coin issuing from the mint at Bhownuggur.

The Circular of Government of the 27th June last with accompanying extract has not been sent to me, so that I do not know to what measure the Mint committee allude in the 3rd paragraph of their letter, neither has the Bhownughur Thacore's answer to Mr Vibart been sent, but Bhownughur has long been known as a place where false and debased coins of different descriptions were fabricated. It is however situated within our limits and is subject to our authority so that there cannot, I presume, be any doubt of our right to prevent coining of any kind there, if Government should so determine, but I am not sufficiently acquainted with Kattewar rights to be able to say whether the Thacore might not be entitled to coin at Leehor if he chose to transfer his mint to that place...

However the Bombay Government was unsure of the closeness of relationship with the Thacoor of Bhaungar and asked the collector at Ahmadabad for his opinion¹³:

I am directed by the Right Honble the Governor in Council to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 26th July last to the address of Mr Chief Secretary Norris soliciting instructions respecting the copper coinage struck in the mint at Bhownuggur and to convey the request of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that you will report the exact relations subsisting between this Government and the Thacore of Bhownuggur and whether they are such as to admit of steps being taken for stopping the mint at that place

The Collector of Ahmadabad replied in October 1831 stating that he believed that the Bombay Government had the right to close the mint at Bhaunagar¹⁴:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th instant, calling upon me to state precisely the relations on which the Government stand with regard to the Rajah of Bhownuggur, and beg to inform you that the Rajah is precisely on the same footing with regard to his possession etc in the Goga Purganna as any other Gamettee. I do not find from any of the records that the Rajah ever claimed any sovereign rights in the Goga Purganna previous to its cession by the Paishwa to the Honourable Company by the treaty of Bassein, and it fully appears by a letter from Mr Chief Secretary Warden dated 23rd April 1811, that the Government did not recognise any further rights than those enjoyed by other Gamettees on our taking possession of the Purganna.

The town of Bhownuggur is subject in every way to the operation of the regulations and I conceive Government would be fully authorized in suppressing or, what would be equivalent to the same, declining to admit the coin as current in our district.

The Rajah in his letter which I did myself the honor to lay before Government, rests his rights on the length of time that the mint has been in operation, upwards of 50 years.

but the Governor also wanted information from other sources and wrote to the political agent in Kathiawar¹⁵:

I am desired by the Right Honble the Governor in Council to request you will reply to my letter dated 18th October last calling upon you to report the exact relations subsisting between this Government and the Thacore of Bhownuggur, and whether they are such as to admit of steps being taken to prevent that chief from maintaining a mint.

The Bhaunaggar question was raised again in April 1832 when the Political Agent in Kathiawar finally got around to replying. His opinion was somewhat at odds with that of the Collector of Ahmadabad, believing that the mint at Bhaunagar had been in existence for many years and could not, therefore, be closed at the demand of Bombay¹⁶:

In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 18th October last and the 22nd ultimo, I have the honor to inform you that as far as the tributary relations subsisting between the Thakore of Bhownuggur and the British Government are concerned, I should conceive that they would not admit of taking any steps beyond those of persuasion to prevent that Chief maintaining a mint as it appears to have existed many years before the permanent settlement was made by the late Colonel Walker and the agreements then entered into only require the tributaries to conform to existing usages.

A great many of the Thakore's villages and the capital Bhownuggur itself are however under the jurisdiction of the Honourable Company, both revenue and judicial, and as such subject to the Collector of Ahmadabad. This may confer on the British Government the power of putting down the mint at Bhownuggur, but the Thakore would no doubt in that case petition for permission to establish it in one of his independent villages and, should we prevent his doing so, he would have great reason to complain of this measure being enforced against him alone. Some of the Chiefs of less consequence still being allowed to keep up their mint.

He went on to discuss the fact that the copper coins of Bhaunagar had been banned from use in the Company's territories when an EIC mint had been established at Dholera in 1811/12 (see Bhandare & Stevens, 2012, JONS 213, pp. 17-22.). This had apparently worked effectively and he suggested that the same might be done again:

The Thakore's Wakeel states that some correspondence took place between Mr Rowles and the Thakore on this subject about the year of Samvut 1867/68 (ad 1810/11) when the mint was established at Dholera. I have desired their Wukeel to produce any letters which may have passed but he has not yet done so, and I therefore beg to suggest that I may be favoured with copies of Mr Rowles' letters to Government on this subject, which will enable me to form a more correct opinion. It must, I think, admit of a question whether our jurisdiction over Bhownuggur as one of the Goga Barra Villages, extends to the power of putting down the mint as it was established so long before that jurisdiction seems to have been exercised either by the Mogul, Peishwa or Gaicawar authorities to the extent it now is. The Thakore complains much of our extension of it but in this point I beg to refer you to Mr Blane's letter to the chief Secretary of the 16th May 1829 handing up a petition on the subject.

When the mint for coining pice was established at Dhollera the currency of the Bhownuggur coin was prohibited in all our districts of Goga, Raunpor and Dhunduka. This I am informed lasted about five years after which coining at Dhollera was discontinued and the Bhownuggur coin became again more or less current in all the above places. A strict prohibition of this would

render the Thakore's mint less valuable to him and he would thereby be more easily persuaded to discontinue it.

All of the local chiefs who had mints in the area placed great value on the privilege of coining their own money but the Political Agent thought that it might be possible to buy them off:

The Chiefs who have mints in this province value the privilege very highly, but should it be an object of Government to introduce the Bombay coins they might perhaps be induced to accede to our wishes by offering them a reduction in their tribute equal to the amount they may be considered to realise from their mints. On this subject, however, I speak with the greatest diffidence, not having made any enquiries from the chiefs concerned on the subject, and being quite ignorant whether putting down the mints in Kathywar would be of sufficient importance to induce the British Government to make the pecuniary sacrifices which such a move would no doubt render necessary.

There then follows several minutes on the subject from different people but concludes with a minute from the Governor¹⁷:

A full consideration of the question leads me to think that the Bhownuggur mint should be suppressed, of the propriety of which measure Mr Sutherland, I observe, entertains no doubt. The right of coinage belongs to us as sovereigns, but as the measure will be disagreeable to the Thakore, I would not recommend it, had I not strong reasons for doing so. In bringing our new coinage into circulation Government has met, is meeting and will probably continue to meet with many obstacles and those obstacles I feel assured from what I have observed at Poona and elsewhere will increase to a very embarrassing extent unless we overcome them by a consistent course of decided measures steadily pursued and firmly enforced.

This appears to have put an end to the matter since no more entries have been found in the records concerning this. Presumably the Bhaunagar mint in question was closed.

Local Native mints in the Concan

In May 1832 the Collector in the Concan reported to Government that there were several mints operating under Angria's control¹⁸:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated the 1st instant with copy of one from the Collector in Candeish reporting that a coinage of copper pice (Dubhoo) is in progress at some mints near Panwell.

There are five mints for coining copper coins in Angria's country and established and farmed by him. They are as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|--|
| Cusba Apta | | 2 mints established in July and September 1831 |
| Mouza Kopur | Turuf | 1 mint established in August 1830 |
| Mouza Dar pulee | Turuf | 1 mint established in December 1831 |
| Mouza Gowan | Turuf | 1 mint established in August 1831 |
| | Ourwuleet | |

The following statement will show the number of coins struck off, and the distance of these places from Panwell

| Places | Distance from Panwell | Amount Coined (Rs) |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Cusba Apta | 5 Coss | 13,000 |
| Mouza Kopur | 1 Coss | 30,000 |
| Ditto Dar pulee | 1 ½ Coss | 2,000 |
| Ditto Gowan | 4 Coss | 10,000 |
| Amounting in all to fifty five thousand Rupees, 55,000 | | |

The copper coins are represented as being of an inferior description.

Angria has I presume the full power of establishing mints in his territory, but it will be obvious to Government that if his copper coins are circulated in the Provinces belonging to the British Government that they must materially interfere with the new Government currency as remarked by Mr Boyd's [letter]. Measures should therefore be taken to suppress the mints and all others which may exist in Angria's territory, either by directing Angria to discontinue the coinage or by prohibiting by proclamation the receipt of the copper coins into the Company's territories in payment of revenue.

The Bombay Government resolved that a letter be sent to Angria asking him to shut the mint:

The Acting Persian Secretary is requested to write to Angria informing him that Government has been apprized of the number of mints which have been lately established by him in the Concan, pointing out the inconvenience which arises from the excessive issue of copper pice from them and its importation into the Honble Company's territory, especially at a time when it is the intention of Government to introduce a copper currency of a different description, and requesting that the mints may all be stopped with the exception of such as may be necessary to supply the circulation within his own districts.

An interesting letter from the Collector in the Concan states that the copper coins issued from Angria's mints were identical to those issued by the EIC and so issuing a proclamation banning Angria's coins would be impossible to enforce¹⁹:

With reference to your letter of the 1st instant in reply to Mr Mills' letter of the 18th ultimo, and directing me to issue a proclamation prohibiting the receipt in payment of revenue of the copper pice issued from the mints established in Angria's territory, I have the honor to state for the information of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that there is no difference between the Honourable Company's pice current, and Angria's excepting that the latter are newly coined, the die being the same, so that it is impossible to check the receipt in payment of revenue. If Angria cannot be prevented coining, which however I should think we have every right to do, it would, I respectfully beg to observe, be advisable to require him to use another die.



Double pice with strange date (1816 inverted?) and inverted letters(enlarged)

Exactly which of the Company's copper coins is meant by the above statement is not clear but, assuming it refers to the balemart coinage of 1802-31, it might help explain the existence of coins with unreadable crude dates.

Despite the Collector's reservations, he was ordered to issue the proclamation:

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 29th ultimo, reporting that owing to there being no difference between the Honourable Company's current pice and that coined by Angria, it will be extremely difficult to check the receipt of the latter in payment of the revenue, and to convey to you the instructions of the Right Honble the Governor in Council, nevertheless, to issue a proclamation as directed in my letter of the 1st of last month, as it may have the effect of discouraging the import into our districts of the pice coined in Angria's territories.

As the new copper currency is shortly to be introduced, His Lordship in Council deems it unnecessary at the present time either to put a stop to Angria's mints or to request him to adopt a different stamp.

The Collector in the Concan had written to Angria asking that either the copper mints should be closed or the circulation of the pice issued therefrom should be confined to his own territories. In June 1832 Angria replied that he had issued orders to stop the circulation of his coins in British territories. In the letter he gives an interesting insight into how the mints were moved around²⁰:

I have received your letter dated 1st June and (after recapitulating substance) have to state in reply that there have been mints for the issue of copper pice established, not recently, but of old in my state which are moved from one village to another according to the convenience of the merchants. There has always been a constant traffic of pice between the merchants of the British territories and those of Colaba. I have issued orders to prevent the circulation of Colaba pice in the British Territories and request that the Bombay Government would issue similar orders. but in July of 1832 several mints continued to operate²¹:

...In reply I beg to state for the information of the Right Honble the Governor in Council that it has not ceased. One manufactory of pice is at work in Coper, 2 in Aptah, 1 in Dapewlee and one in Gonhan...

However, by August Angria had agreed to shut all but one mint²²:

I have had the pleasure of receiving your Lordship's letter dated 4th August, requesting that I should take measures to stop all mints but one in my territories.

In reply I beg to state that I have issued injunctions to the managers of mints according to the answer which I sent to your Lordships former letter.

With respect to the present letter, though I shall suffer loss by the reduction of the number of mints, yet as I am unwilling to do anything which might inconvenience the British Government, I have complied with your Lordship's request. But I request that such an arrangement may be made that the mint which I have retained may not meet with obstruction for the future from any public officer.

This seems to have resolved the problems of the local mints issuing copper coins that were interfering with the distribution of the new copper coinage. However, this had only solved one of the problems faced by the Bombay authorities. Other problems caused the issue of new coins to be delayed still further and even by 1836 the coins were only being used in half the territories under the control of the Bengal Presidency²³, but that is a story for another time.

References

- ¹ See Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 407 (15th November 1831). Letter from the mint committee to Government, dated 11th October 1831. This contains a copy of the proclamation. Also IOR, P/411/49, 1st December 1830, No. 4.
- ² Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 281 (27th July 1831). Letter from the Junior Principal Collector, Poona, to Government, dated 11th July 1831.
- ³ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 302 (17th August 1831). Letter from Bombay mint committee to Government, dated 25th July 1831.
- ⁴ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 304 (17th August 1831). Letter from Bombay Government to the Resident at Sattarah, dated 11th August 1831.
- ⁵ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 333 (21st September 1831). Letter from the Resident at Sattarah to Government, dated 26th August 1831.
- ⁶ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 350 (12th October 1831). Letter from the Junior Principal Collector of Poona to Government, dated 19th August 1831.

- ⁷ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 391 (9th November 1831). Letter from the Resident at Satara to Government, dated 16th October 1831.
- ⁸ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 314 (24th August 1831). Letter from the Principal Collector of Ahmadabad (J Vibart) to Government, dated 26th July 1831.
- ⁹ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 315 (24th August 1831). Translation of a letter from Rawul Nujjasungjee and son Koonvursee Bhowsee to John Vibart esquire, Magistrate of the Zillah of Ahmadabad.
- ¹⁰ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 372 (19th October 1831). Letter from the Bombay mint committee to Government, dated 24th August 1831.
- ¹¹ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 373 (19th October 1831). Letter from the Bombay Government, to the revenue commissioner, dated 5th September 1831.
- ¹² Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 374 (19th October 1831). Letter from the revenue commissioner to Government, dated 7th October 1831.
- ¹³ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 375 (19th October 1831). Letter to the principal collector of Ahmadabad from Government, dated 18th October 1831.
- ¹⁴ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 448 (31st December 1831). Letter from the principal collector of Ahmadabad to Government, dated 29th October 1831.
- ¹⁵ Bombay Consultations. P/411/50. No. 449 (31st December 1831). Letter to the political agent in Kattywar from Government, dated 22nd December 1831.
- ¹⁶ Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 62 (17th April 1832). Letter from the Acting Political Agent for Kathiawar to Government, dated 3rd January 1832.
- ¹⁷ Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 69 (17th April 1832). Minute of the Governor (Clare) dated 17th April 1832.
- ¹⁸ Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 141 (6th June 1832). Letter from the Acting Principal Collector in the Concan to Government, dated 18th May 1832.
- ¹⁹ Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 171 (11th July 1832). Letter from the Principal Collector in the Concan to Government, dated 29th June 1832.
- ²⁰ Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 175 (18th July 1832). Translation of a letter from Raghojee Angria, chieftain of Colaba to Government, dated 23rd June 1832.
- ²¹ Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 203 (8th August 1832). Letter from the Principal Collector in the Concan to Government, dated 26th July 1832.
- ²² Bombay Consultations. P/411/51. No. 254 (19th September 1832). Substance of a letter from Angria, Chieftain of Colaba, dated 30th August 1832.
- ²³ Dispatches to Bombay. E/4/1061. 187-197. 10th May 1837.

THE COINAGE OF KACHAR: SOME NEW FINDS

By Dr David Cashin

During the 1980's and 90's it was my privilege to correspond with and provide some research material to Nicholas Rhodes regarding the coinage of North East India. I was living in Bangladesh at the time. Nicholas has sadly passed away and part of his collection was recently sold through Spink in London⁴. He and I shared an interest in the coinage of Kachar, a little known state of North East India. This coinage is quite rare in almost all types and the publication of new coins of this realm he considered of some importance. In this study I will present 17 previously unpublished coins of Kachar along with photographs and some analysis of their orthography. I will follow the numerical pattern that Nicholas

⁴ The Nicholas Rhodes Collection Coins of North East India (Part 1), Spink, 24 September, 2013. I have also consulted photos of unsold items from Spink and other auction catalogues (Steve Album).

established in his short work "The Coinage of Kachar" from 1986 including inscriptions and notes as to weight, diameter and design⁵. I have also consulted the plates from his later work together with S.K. Bose on the "History of the Dimasa-Kacharis"⁶. Most of these coins are known from similar types although inscription and design differences are significant. Five of these coins are unique dies or types that I have not found reference to in the literature.

In 2003 I came across a Kachari ¼ Rupee of Yaso Narayana in a small coin shop in Hamilton, New Zealand. The owner was not forthcoming about provenance but I hoped in future trips to uncover the source. In 2013 while on sabbatical in New Zealand I became part of a coin club and discovered the provenance of the Kachari coin. One of the members had been in London and as he put it "replied to an advert in a coin journal in the early seventies. The Kachari coins belonged to the wife of a retired army officer and may have come from a hoard." He had purchased 16 coins of which 4 had been sold, including the one in the Hamilton coin shop. He still had 12 in his possession. I believe he was careful to keep at least one copy of each die variety. Since these are all ¼ rupees of Yasho Narayana they all come from one of these older hoards discovered in the 20th century. Two of these coins are not listed in Rhodes's study of die and inscription types. I have added to this a collection of 5 other Kachari coins from Bangladesh. Three of these are new varieties. Rhodes examined 148 specimens for his study. This study adds seventeen new specimens to that list including five which are new varieties. Fifteen other coins are available from the Spink catalogue although it is unclear how many of these are distinct from the 1986 study.

Analysis of the Coins

Rhodes numbered his coins chronologically by ruler and then by denomination and die-types. I will follow his pattern to incorporate this new group within the context of his previous research.

Megha Narayana (c. 1568-83)

Tanka: Rhodes provided just one photo of a Megha Narayan tanka from his research, although he examined 2 specimens. The one pictured is numbered 4. Three coins are found of this denomination from his collection in the Spink catalogue. Number 241 in the Spink catalogue seems to be a die match for coin 4 in his 1986 study. Here are two further examples, both different from the Spink catalogue, which I have numbered 4.1 and 4.2.



4.1 Hara Gauri/ Charana Para/ yana Hachenga/sa Vamsaja P⁷ 25 mm Sri Sri Megha/Narayana/ (Bhup)alasya/Sake 148 10.3g

This piece is of a die type not found in either Spink or the 1986 study. It is a close but not exact match to coin 10.1 in the Bose-Rhodes study from 2006. The dies seem quite worn which would indicate that it was used extensively by the mint at the time. The sold and unsold items from the Spink catalogue includes ten tankas of this king, all of different die types. There are some die matches in the Rhodes-Bose study from 2006 but these are the same pieces as the ones offered in the Spink catalogue. I have yet to find a die match for any Megha Narayana tankas and this,

⁵ N. Rhodes, The Coinage of Kachar, Oxford: University Printing House, reprinted from the 'Numismatic Chronicle' Volume 146, 1986.

⁶ S.K. Bose and N. Rhodes, A History of the Dimasa Kacharis as Seen Through Their Coinage, Calcutta: Mira Bose, 2006.

⁷ David Cashin collection.

coupled with the wearing of dies evident in some pieces such as the one above, would indicate that the coinage was originally extensive but that the survival rate of pieces has been exceedingly low. The date is incomplete, also typical of several other pieces. This was obtained from a private collector in Bangladesh in 1990.



4.2 Hara Gauri/Charana Para/yana Hache/...saja Dhaka⁸ 23 mm Sri Sri Me/...rayana/ ...palasya/Sake 14 9.9g

This is an unusual piece. It is a narrow flan type I have not seen before though I was told there are three others of the same type all from the same hoard in the same collection in Dhaka. This hoard was recovered around 1990. I was able to photograph the coin before it was transferred to its new owner, a member of the Bangladesh military. Kachari Tankas were famous for very wide flans and this seems to show a very different standard, narrower than any other I have seen. The orthography is of a more primitive style than the coins of Megha Narayana in the Rhodes collection. There is one coin from the 2006 study which has very different orthography but a similar narrow flan. The present piece has also been counter-struck on both sides obscuring some of the text so I invite critique and perhaps another interpretation of the inscription. This photo is taken from a black and white print I made at the time which is why the quality of the photograph is lower.

Quarter Tankas



5.1 Hara Gau/ri chara/ na para P 18 mm Sri Sri Me/gha Nara/ yana de(va) 2.4g

This coin has the same inscription as the Rhodes piece in the Spink catalogue (number 245) and 1986 paper (number 5), but is a different die type and is clearer. The reverse final word is clearly *de(va)*. There is another specimen which is a die match for the Rhodes piece. This piece was illustrated in a hand drawn rendition from the 2006 study. I believe this is the first time the piece has been actually photographed. This is only the third piece known of this king and denomination. It was found with a dealer in Bangladesh in 1988.

Yaso Narayana (1583-1601)

Tanka: No photographs of Yaso Narayana's tankas are presented in Rhodes' study, though he examined 6 specimens of three die types. Five are found in the Spink catalogue, only one with a clear date. They are all of distinct die types and with two inscriptional types. The coin listed here has a very clear date and a flan size about the same as the smallest presented in the Spink catalogue. It seems to be a die match for coin 16.1 in the 2006 study. Its orthography is of a distinct and high quality. It is hard to tell

⁸ Collection of Bangladesh army officer.

which examples Rhodes was referring to in his study, since there are no pictures, so I have conflated the group with Spink (6-8.1-6) and made this coin 6-8.7 of the type. This was found with a Bangladeshi dealer in 1989.



6-8.7 Hara Gauri/charana Para/ Sri Sri Yaso/Narayana De/
Yana Hachenga/sa Vamsaja va Bhupalasya/Sake 1505
P 25 mm ?

Quarter Tanka: This coin is by far the most common of all Kachari coins though it is scarce. Many coins from hoards are preserved in the British museum and in various museums in India. Some coins that came to London were melted down according to my New Zealand contact. It is hard to estimate but I would guess a hundred or so are still extant in private collections including the 16 found in New Zealand. The coins Rhodes photographed were primarily from the British Museum and the private collection of a Mr D. Chandaria, who had obtained a hoard of 44 such quarter tankas. Rhodes identified 9 different major varieties and photographed 45 separate coins comprising about half the coins in his photographs. He examined a total of 82 pieces. Only one was sold through Spink in 2013. I will incorporate the 13 I have photographed into his system by types where orthography and decorative style is similar. Of the coins I have photographed two are a die match to coin 9.1 in his paper, one is a die match to coin 9.2, two are die matches for coin 10.1, one for 10.2, four for 10.3 and 1 for 10.17. I am including photographs of the types for those who do not have access to Rhodes' 1986 study. Two of the coins in the New Zealand hoard are unique dies and I will list them last as 17.2 and 17.3.



9.1 Hara Gau/ri⁹ Sri Sri Ya/so Naraya/
Chara/na Para na devasya
NZ¹⁰ 23 mm 2.7g¹¹



⁹ Rhodes cites this text as "Hara Gaura" but it is clearly "Hara Gauri". He transliterates this form correctly as "i" in 10.1.

¹⁰ New Zealand private collection.

¹¹ Because the coins are a die match I am assuming the weights and circumferences provided in Rhodes 1986 study are the same. I have not actually weighed or measured the circumference of these coins in New Zealand with the exception of three I have in my possession. These match Rhodes' circumferences and weights.

9.2 Hara Gaur/Charana Sri Sri Ya/so Naraya/
Pa/rayana na Devasya
NZ 23 mm 2.7g



10.1 Hara Gaur/i Charana/ Sri Sri Ya/so Nara/
Parayana yana Deva
NZ 24 mm 2.7g



10.2 Hara Gau/ri Charana/ Sri Sri Ya/so Nara/
Parayana yana Deva
NZ 24 mm 2.6g



10.3 Hara Gau/ri chara/ Sri Sri Ya/so Nara/
na Para yana Deva
NZ 23 mm 2.6g



10.17 Hara Gau/ri Chara/ Sri Sri Ya/so Nara/
Na Para yana Deva
NZ 23 mm 2.6g



17.2 Hara Ga/ra Chara Sri Sri Ya/sa Na/
na Para rayana
NZ ? ?

This piece, with its distinctive garbled "H" in "Hara" is very similar to Rhodes 10.18 but the decorative forms are distinct and it lacks "Deva" at the end of the inscription on the reverse side. It is

a unique die type, somewhat crudely engraved but attractively done. All of the R's have dots in the center.



17.3 Hara Gau/ra ... Sri Sri Ya/so
Parayana ? Nara/yana Deva ?
NZ ?

Rhodes occasionally refers to "botched" or "extremely Crude" lettering, as in the case of coins 10.11 and 16.2 in his study. This piece goes well beyond that to what I would call a "shattered" text. My transcription is based on vague similarities to other specimens and the "Charana" we might expect after "Gauri" is so distorted as to be unintelligible. The engraver seems to work only in straight lines and was either a novice at the trade or did not know how to read the language. It is not unusual in medieval coinage for the orthography to be "inventive", but the coins of this type seem to be much fewer in number in Kachari coinage. It does not seem to be a contemporary forgery as the metal appears to be relatively high silver content. The decorative framework engraving is well done. There has been speculation as to why some Kachari coins have language that is exquisitely engraved and others are "irregular"¹². Perhaps professional engravers from other kingdoms trained the Kacharis and then returned home? Was there a time of crisis when only a few coins were minted by novices? This issue will probably remain a mystery.

Indra Pratap Narayana (1601-?)

Tanka: Rhodes provides two illustrations of Indra Pratap Tankas with very distinct inscriptions, both in the British Museum. They are both broad flan. One was even broader than the Yaso Narayana broad flan tanka offered in the Spink auction. No tankas or ¼ tankas of Indra Pratap were offered in the Spink auction, though at least one piece may be offered at the next auction. This piece is of much narrower flan size than the British museum pieces and is undated. The orthography is somewhat "botched" but attractive and similar to piece 19. The lettering is confusing though I think the final reverse word is meant to be "Sake" meaning "in the Saka era" but the date is not provided. Perhaps the engraver ran out of room? We have seen that on a number of other pieces where incomplete dates are provided. I will number this piece as 19.1. This was obtained from a private collector in Bangladesh in 1990.



¹² Rhodes listed some of the irregularities but left this speculation to others (cf. pp. 163-4). As an Indologist who has read many medieval Bengali manuscripts I would say that the variations of letter forms is quite normal in the unstandardized orthography of the time. Various forms for the three "S" letters in Bengali, vowel variations and irregular forms for ligatures, variations of "y", "C", "Ch", "N", "M" are of such a nature in medieval Bengali that one is forced to create a sort of alphabet listing for each manuscript, and even then there is inconsistency. Of greater mystery is the variation between highly intelligible texts and those that are utterly garbled in form.

19.1 Hara Gaura/Charana Para/ Sri Sri Indra/Pratap Na/
Yana Hacheng/Vamsada (ja?) rayana Bhupa/laya Sake
P 27 mm 10.4g

Nick Rhodes concluded his study in 1986 with these words:

"This account of the coinage of Kachar must be regarded as incomplete. It is a remarkable fact, of the sixteen major types, no fewer than eleven are listed from unique specimens. This strongly indicates that there must be other types to be discovered, and we can only await their appearance and publication with keen anticipation."

In the ensuing years Nick added to his collection, as the Spink auction catalogue illustrates. I trust that this brief study in some way continues that process of discovery he awaited "with keen anticipation".

THE TIBETAN MONK TANGKA STRUCK IN GOLD

By Wolfgang Bertsch

The Tibetan silver coin referred to as "monk tangka" by western collectors is known in Tibetan as *Kelsang tangka* and is said to have been distributed to monks during the Mönlam Festival (Great Prayer Festival) which took place after New Year Day in February 1910. Possibly the distribution ceremony took place in the "Kelsang Palace" (*bskal bzang pho brang*) which is located in the Norbu Lingka (summer residence of the Dalai Lamas) and was constructed by order of and named after the 7th Dalai Lama (1708-1757).

According to Tsipon Shakabpa whom N. G. Rhodes interviewed (4th June 1974) this coin is also referred to by Tibetans as *spyang tam* which has the literal meaning of "eye tangka". This expression is most probably an abbreviated form of *spyang gsal sku 'gyed [tam]* which has been translated by Goldstein (2001) as "alms given by the Dalai Lama to monks". The literal meaning is "clear eye alms".

The normal issue which is struck in silver is well known (Y 14; fig. 4). Less known are specimens which are struck in gold and may have been presented to high monastic authorities or important incarnations.

The three monk tangkas struck in gold which are illustrated here are struck from the same pair of dies. So far we have not discovered a monk tangka in silver which is die-linked to the gold pieces. Karl Gabrisch (Gabrisch, 1990/91) believed that the piece in the Carlo Valdetaro collection (Fig. 2) is a forgery produced in Nepal, but as only evidence for his assumption he mentions that Charles Bell wrote in 1905 that there are no gold coins in Tibet (Bell, 1978, Vol. I, p. 118).

The late Carlo Valdetaro himself wrote the following in his unpublished catalogue of his Tibetan coins (1974, p. 24): "The AV specimens do not seem to be proper "coins", but rather 'fancy' editions, struck on standard dies and gold washed".

However, the specimen in my collection (Fig. 1) is of solid gold, so probably is the specimen in the Valdetaro collection which is now in the British Museum and the coin sold in auction no. 12 of Stephen Album (Fig. 3).

The late Nicholas Rhodes originally thought that this type of gold coin was dubious, but later he seems to have revised his opinion in view of the fact that a Tibetan Shri Mangalam tangka struck in gold was discovered in Nepal and is now in the collection of the late Alexander Lissanevitch (Rhodes, Nicholas and Lissanevitch, Alexander B., 2010). When Rhodes classified the Tibetan collection of the British Museum he did not mention that the monk tangka struck in gold ex Carlo Valdetaro was a dubious piece.

In this context one should also mention that Xiao Huaiyuan illustrated a gold coin struck from a pair of dies which was normally used for the minting of the silver coins of one Sho of the 58th year of the Qian Long era. (Xiao Huaiyuan, 1987, p. 24 and coin no. 3-19).

Apparently this issue, as well as the earlier Shri Mangalam tangka struck in gold and the later gold monk tangkas which we discuss here, were not intended for normal circulation, but for presentation to Tibetan or Chinese authorities.

I believe that the above facts show that there is no reason why one should doubt the authenticity of the three gold coins which I illustrate here.

I only know of these three specimens of which further examples do not seem to exist in other western collections, but one may be in a private collection in Nepal.

Note: All illustrated coins are enlarged.



Fig. 1

Weight: 5.07 g; Diameter 26 mm

Collection W. Bertsch (Purchased in Patan, Nepal, in 1997)

The coin has been analysed: it is of solid gold. It may once have been used during religious ceremonies as it still shows traces of red powder ("puja powder").



Fig. 2

Weight: 5.19 g; Diameter: 26 mm

British Museum, Carlo Valdetaro bequest (1989,0904.425).



Fig. 3

Stephen Album, Auction no. 12, January 13th, 14th 2012, lot 900. Weight: 5.12 g



Fig. 4

Monk Tangka struck in silver. Collection W. Bertsch. Similar to the gold coins, but struck from different dies. Weight: 4.04 g. Diameter: 25.8 – 26.0 mm

There are various obverse varieties which can be distinguished by the number of pellets (one, two or none) which are placed in the beginning or at the end of the syllables located in the trapeziums which are attached to the central square. The above illustrated silver tangka is of the same pellet-variety as the three gold issues, but it is struck from different dies.

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SOME LATE, MOST UNUSUAL COINS OF BHUTAN, PERIOD III, AROUND 1900

By Klaus Bronny, Robert Lehmann, Hilmar Jobst Herzberg, Ekkehard Doehring.

Introduction

The extensive, manifold, and at times confusing coinage of Bhutan has so far not been comprehensively studied nor classified. Significant pioneering work was done by the late Nicholas Rhodes, but the amazing diversity and variability of this coinage could not be adequately covered during his lifetime. Based upon his work, an attempt is under way, by one of the authors (K.B.) to provide such a systematic overview. In the process of completing this exercise, we came across some unusual Bhutanese coins, which merit publication.

In 1991 Rhodes wrote an article about a new type of Bhutanese copper coin (1). In this article Rhodes says:

"The coins published here, for the first time, are all struck from the same reverse die, and were, hence, presumably all struck at the same place, and within a short time period. The obverses are struck by at least three different dies, two of which are of an unpublished variety, with the letter "Sa" and a swastika on a large checker-board design. All the dies are much larger than the flan, so that different parts of the dies are visible on different specimens."

In his second significant article about the coinage of Bhutan, Rhodes mentioned these coins, as well. (2)

"These pieces probably date from the late nineteenth century, and form a heavily die-linked group, that must have originated from a single mint. Most have a very distinctive reverse die, with little "ears" on the letter Cha. On some coins the reverse die has had several additional lines engraved on it. One remarkable feature of this group is their weights, with specimens ranging from 1.3g to

4.9g, although I have no reason to believe, that more than one denomination was intended."

Since the publication of those articles, a new reverse die has been found with a small "Cha" and four dots in each corner of the square. Coins struck from this die are published below.

Most of the coins were obtained from normal trade sources, while the iron coin was acquired in Nepal in the year 2009 by one of the authors.

The coins

The following six coins, which are shown in Figure 1 form a die-linked group. The illustrations are slightly enlarged.



1. *Obv.*: Swastika above "sa"

Rev.: "va ra" retrograde, "cha" with "ears"

20.00 mm; 5.35g; Copper



2. *Obv.*: same die as 1.

Rev.: new die with "cha", 4 dots in square

22.00 mm; 4.65 g; Brass



3. *Obv.*: new die with "sa" in square

Rev.: similar die as 1, extra lines in "va cha ra"

Thin flan 22.00 mm; 1.95 g; Copper



4. *Obv.*: same die as 3.

Rev.: same die as 2.

Thin flan 19.00 mm; 1.85 g; Copper



5. *Obv.*: new die with "sa" retrograde, to left 5 dots, below "sa" retro., top line: second "sa". to left "x"

Rev.: same die as 2. Thin flan

20.50 mm; 1.90 g; Copper



6. *Obv.*: same die as 5.

Rev.: same die as 5.

Thin flan 21.00 mm; 2.00 g; Iron

The iron coin, number 6, appears somehow crude at first sight, but this is not unusual for this kind of coin, of period three, roughly around 1900. However, what is most unusual is that the coin is not only magnetic but virtually jumps up to the magnet with great impetus, when you place it some 3 cm above it. This amazing fact we have not encountered in about 1000 specimens of similar and related Bhutanese coins which we have tested in that way.

The analysis of coin number 6 shows the following composition: 97.3% iron, 1.7% copper and some traces, such as 0.5% manganese, 0.2% zinc, and 0.1% nickel but no silver, tin or lead above the detection limit of about 0.05%.

The analysis was carried out by using X-Ray fluorescence on corrosion-free areas. The elemental composition and the surface character do not point to a forgery. The coin seems to be genuine.

The high amount of copper in the iron is not typical for historically used iron. On the other hand, iron in copper as a waste product can be explained by faulty copper production. Such faulty production results in copper with a high elemental iron content if the copper is produced from the mineral, chalcopyrite, or other iron-contaminated copper ores. If the smelting process is heavily deoxidizing, it results in inclusions of elemental iron. A part of these iron inclusions rise to the upper part of the melt because of the different density of liquid iron and copper. Thus, in the upper part of the melting pot, iron, with low copper content (below one to some percent) enriches; in the lower part of the melting pot, copper, with low iron content (the main part of the melt) enriches. Such alloys of copper with measureable amounts of iron are typical for India and Nepal, neighbour states and, at least in the case of India, known copper providers of Bhutan.

Furthermore, such poorly malleable copper alloys are typical for regions with underdeveloped copper production. This low quality copper was of minor value, since due to the high iron content, one cannot use it in most craftwork or for industrial purposes, because it cracks while cold-working it; yet it is still suitable for striking coins. Such low-grade copper was exported as cheap copper, and had been used for coins since ancient times. Coins produced in this way are sometimes magnetic because of the high degree of elemental iron inclusions. An extreme example of such copper production is iron, with low copper (some percent) content. It is possible that coin number 6 was made of from such an alloy and not of common iron. This could make sense when we look at the differences in the weight (< 1.8 to > 5.3 g) and the metal (copper or brass) of the coins in question. It seems that Bhutanese coins were not subject to a specific standard of weight or metal, so that any coppery metal on hand was used.

Discussion

The detection of such a high iron content surprised us substantially and has, to the best of our current knowledge, not previously been reported in the coinage of Bhutan. Iron is not an easy material for striking coins and is avoided whenever possible because of its poor preconditions for casting and striking coins. Copper is much preferred.

In our pool of about 1000 Bhutanese coins, we found about 1 in 200 coins to be slightly magnetic, so as to just stick to the magnet by itself, but clearly not jumping at it. This fact has been well known among experts on the subject, and it has mostly been interpreted as impurity of iron ores into certain copper ores. Or alternatively, it has been suggested, that oxidative iron adhesion from neighbouring material may diffuse into the coins as surface coverage. However, this latter possibility cannot result in magnetic coins because, for magnetism to occur, inclusions of elemental iron are needed, not oxidised iron. In our opinion, it is possible that a low-grade alloy (iron with copper inclusions) was used, which was a product of a faulty copper production process (copper ore mixed with iron ore). Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the copper content of about 1.7% in the iron. Copper coins were used in local trade, whereas coins for "long-distance trading and bigger business" transactions, were made of silver and rated according to their weight (4).

The surprisingly high iron content that we have observed allows various interpretations and leaves some questions, which we cannot answer at the moment: where did the iron come from? Was it indigenous or foreign?

Iron and copper imports from India have clearly been reported in the history of Bhutan. Indigenous iron sources have been reported as well, and occasional iron mines from Bhutan have been published (4). One of the great "miracles" of Bhutan is a bridge, held together solely by iron chains, chemically confirmed iron, that seemed to originate from a legendary figure called Thangtong Gyalpo. One reported iron field was in the area of the Dagala Mountains in Bhutan (5). But this is long before the published piece was struck, around 1900.

Additional questions remain to be answered, such as: why has only one specimen become known of this particular alloy? Was it pure coincidence, or were more specimens of iron coins struck?

We have not found clear answers to these questions yet, and, therefore, would encourage other collectors to review their material and, if in a position to do so, help in settling these issues.

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AN UNUSUAL DURRANI RUPEE OF PESHAWAR



Coins were struck at Peshawar in the name of Ahmad Shah Durrani from AH 1161 ahd until the end of his reign in AH 1186 yr 26 in normal Mughal style with his couplet on the obverse and the *jalūs* formula and mintname on the reverse, as can be seen in the image below of a rupee of year 12..



The rupee being published here was struck in year 10 of his reign and is unusual in having only the mintname and regnal year on the reverse, within dotted and linear circles, rather like the contemporary issues of Mashhad in the name of this ruler. The rupee has a diameter of 23 mm and weighs 11.34 g.

AND FINALLY

Robert Bracey

The Oriental collection at the British Museum has nearly 100,000 coin and occasionally there are surprises waiting in the trays. While examining coins in the trays of Sogdian and Hunnic material I chanced upon the following oddity.



Figure 1: An odd coin from the trays of the British Museum

This coin is copper weighs 7.16g, is 22mm and has a 12oc die axis.

The obverse depicts a bust wearing some sort of clothing over the shoulder held by a ring. On the left and the right are two different tamgas.

The reverse depicts a series of symbols which appear to be arranged in three lines. The middle line has a tamga in the centre flanked by two tamgas which appear to be the same, the tamga on the right has a circle below it. The top line and the bottom appear to be Brahmi script.

Though this coin was shown to several other colleagues present at the time this no-one was able to identify it. It is probably a fantasy, a concoction of different elements drawn from a variety of genuine coins. The obvious question is if the concoction is a modern one or an ancient one?

The coin was purchased in 1982 for the British museum so could easily be a modern forgery though there is no sign of casting and it is not obvious what its prototype should be.



The inscription is not clear, that at the top appears to start with a *na*, and the third of what may be four characters could be *ma*. Unfortunately this might equally be a circle and crescent symbol.



The reverse has two visible characters and enough room for a third. The first is *ha* or perhaps *pa* conjoined with another character, while the second is *ra*. It is a remarkably concoction if it is a modern product, but is equally inexplicable if ancient. I offer it here to readers as an example of the oddities that are often buried unpublished in coin cabinets.

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