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From the Editor

This volume presents the latest numismatic research of several members, both academics and collectors. The first paper examines a group of Mauryan punchmarked coins that throws up evidence that *mashakas* circulated alongside Mauryan punchmarked coins. We then take a look at heavy lead coins issued by the Mitras of eastern Punjab in c. 2nd century BCE. We also have the discovery of a new initial on an early gold coin of Samatata, followed by a detailed analysis that places it in the context of the series. Finally, this volume reveals a new gold *tanka* of the first independent sultan of the Deccan.

Karan Singh

A GROUP OF MAURYA PUNCHMARKED COINS, INCLUDING *MASHAKAS*

Tyler Holman

In late 2020, a large collection of Indian coins was sold at Bruunrasmussen eAuction 2043. Among the coins sold was a group of 84 punchmarked coins (Lot 5150); while no provenance could be established for the coins, the patina and consistent typology of the group suggested that they may represent a hoard or part of a hoard. This group subsequently reappeared on eBay, where more detailed photographs and measurements gave the author an opportunity to examine and catalogue them according to the classification scheme established in Gupta and Hardaker's *Punchmarked Coinage of the Indian Subcontinent* (henceforth *GH*).

The coins have a grey patina with patches of silver chloride, along with cuprous and ferrous encrustations. Some coins appear to have been partially cleaned. Most of the coins exhibit low weight, but the designs are not substantially worn; this suggests metallic leaching is to blame, as opposed to physical wear. The patina and apparent leaching indicate that the coins had been recovered from an aquatic environment (Bopearachchi, private communication).

The patina and composition of this group is very similar to punchmarked coins from the Mir Zakah II hoard, which was clandestinely excavated in 1992 and then dispersed into the market (Bopearachchi 2011: 38-40.). The majority of its contents, which ranged from Gandharan bent bars to Kushan issues, remains unaccounted for. Fortunately, Osmund Bopearachchi had the opportunity to hastily examine a portion of these coins in a Peshawar bazaar in 1994, and Elizabeth Errington was later able to catalogue two large samples of the punchmarked coins (2003: 69-121). Robert Tye has offered additional commentary to clarify some of the discrepancies regarding the two samples (Tye 2006: 167-171). The general composition of the present group is essentially the same as the Mir Zakah II samples, including a preponderance of *GH* VI 575 coins above all other issues. Many of the Mir Zakah II coins also exhibit abnormally low weight due to metallic leaching. The major difference between the group presently under examination and the Mir Zakah II samples is that the latter did not include any *mashaka* fractional coins, whereas the present group contains 14 of these small coins. Although it is difficult to attribute coins from the market as belonging to a hoard, let alone a specific hoard, the possibility that the present group came from Mir Zakah is certainly a possibility (Tye and Bopearachchi, private communications).

The most significant finding from the present group comes from its inclusion of *mashaka* fractional coins. The *mashaka* is a small silver coin which weighed approximately 2 *rattis* (c. 0.214 g), a 1/16th fraction of the *karshapana*'s 32 *rattis* (c. 3.43 g) (Tye 2020: 3-6). Most fractional coins have been discovered as isolated finds, and analysis has depended primarily upon the aggregation of such isolated finds, with the Bhir Mound Hoard being the primary exception (Hardaker 1999: 5). The present group demonstrates, for the first time, the circulation of *mashakas* alongside the final phases of punchmarked coinage, Series VIb and VII. That the fractional coins were deposited contemporaneously to the later punchmarked coins is confirmed by the fact that examples of both types were found adhered together; for instance, Coin 60 and *Mashaka* 9b.

For analysis, the *mashaka* coins in this group are classified according to Terry Hardaker's *The Mashaka Fractional Coinage of Ancient India* (1999), the most thorough treatment of this

coinage. Hardaker's classification system places the fractional coins in four groups (1999: 3):

- Group A: Marks identical to official pre-Mauryan or Mauryan marks
- Group B: Marks based on an official prototype, but differing in some way
- Group C: Marks identical to the marks of other states
- Group D: Marks with no official prototype

It is unfortunate that only six out of the 14 *mashakas* in this group could be identified with relative certainty, as the discovery of more *mashakas* in a context alongside punchmarked coins could substantially increase our understanding of the series. What can be said of this group is that it resembles the assumptions Hardaker deduced from aggregate data regarding the chronology of the series. Hardaker hypothesised that weight and fineness were more important determiners of age than the symbols on the coin (1999: 7-8). He found that the 79 *mashakas* from the Bhir Mound hoard, dating to circa 300 BCE, the beginning of the Mauryan period, were made with fine silver, whereas aggregate data compiled from isolated finds and a small number of later hoards showed a gradual debasement, with circulation eventually being dominated by heavily debased silver and copper-plated (possibly unofficial) specimens (Hardaker 1999: 7-9), like 8b in the present group. This group aligns well with Hardaker's assumptions, with most *mashakas* appearing debased and some, such as 8b, are apparently made entirely from copper.

Table A. List of main series coins in group

No.	GH no.	Wt. (g)	Diameter (mm)	Note
1	III 321	2.03	17x15	
2	IVb 359	3.12	16x17	
3*	Va 482	2.78	18x12	
4*	Va 505	2.15	12x12	
5	Va 509	2.98	15x11	
6	VI	3.16	13x13	Symbol 374 reverse mark
7	VI	3.24	17x13	
8	VIb 542	3.06	17x15	
9	VIb 543	3.34	19x12	
10	VIb 568-570	3.19	16x13	
11	VIb 568	3.11	15x15	
12	VIb 568-570	3.08	13x15	
13	VIb 570	2.48	12x14	
14*	VIb 573	2.70	12x15	
15	VIb 573-575	2.59	16x15	
16	VIb 573-575	2.07	16x14	
17	VIb 574?	2.78	14x14	
18	VIb 574	2.56	13x16	
19	VIb 574	2.13	17x15	
20*	VIb 574	2.91	15x14	
21*	VIb 574	2.40	19x13	
22	VIb 574	3.37	12x16	
23	VIb 574	2.32	23x13	
24	VIb 574	3.09	13x13	
25	VIb 574	2.49	15x15	
26	VIb 574	2.97	16x16	
27	VIb 574	2.93	14x15	
28	VIb 574	2.33	17x11	
29	VIb 574	2.91	14x15	
30	VIb 574	2.87	17x14	

31	VIb 574	2.61	16x15	
32	VIb 574	2.35	25x11	
33	VIb 574	2.49	16x15	
34	VIb 574	2.59	16x17	
35	VIb 574	2.78	16x16	
36	VIb 574	2.97	18x19	Has sixth obverse mark
37	VIb 574	1.92	16x13	
38	VIb 574	3.10	13x15	
39	VIb 574	3.13	13x17	
40	VIb 574	2.82	17x12	
41	VIb 574	2.31	15x12	
42	VIb 574	2.53	14x14	
43	VIb 574	2.36	16x13	
44	VIb 574	2.78	16x15	
45	VIb 574	2.69	13x15	
46	VIb 574	2.03	14x15	
47	VIb 574	2.93	14x15	
48	VIb 574	2.32	16x16	
49	VIb 574	2.31	17x17	
50	VIb 574	3.05	16x16	
51	VIb 574	3.06	17x17	
52	VIb 575	2.44	20x11	
53	VIb 575	2.66	13x16	
54	VIb 575?	2.61	16x15	
55	VII 589	2.80	12x15	
56	VII 589	2.99	12x15	
57	VII 590-591	3.01	12x15	
58	VII 591	2.81	13x13	
59*	VII 595	3.37	14x11	Mark 474 on reverse
60*	?	2.91	12x15	
61*	?	3.44	13x13	
62	?	2.91	12x12	
63	?	2.98	21x19	Adhered to 70
64*	?	2.60	12x11	
65*	?	3.37	14x11	
66	?	2.98	15x17	Adhered to 71
67*	?	2.91	14x14	
68*	?	2.74	14x12	
69	?	5.91	16x17	Adhered to 64
70	?	2.98	15x17	Adhered to 67

* Signifies an adhered *mashaka*

Table B. List of *mashaka* fractions in group[†]

No.	Hardaker no.	Note
1b	D9?	Adhered to no. 61
2b	B 1-10 or A.c2	Adhered to no. 21
3b	B1-9?	Adhered to no. 69
4b	D2	Loose
5b	D15	Adhered to no. 14
6b	D15-16	Adhered to no. 4
7b	?	Adhered to no. 3
8b	Possibly B 20-22	Adhered to no. 20
9b	Possibly a six-armed symbol?	Adhered to no. 60
10b	?	Adhered to no. 62
11b	?	Adhered to no. 64
12b	?	Adhered to no. 65
13b	?	Adhered to no. 68
14b	?	Adhered to no. 69

[†] As most of the *mashakas* were still adhered to *karshapanas*, no weights and measurements could be collected

Conclusion

This group offers a small but significant addition to our understanding of the relationship between the main punchmarked *karshapana* series and the fractional *mashaka* coinage. Regardless of whether the group represents a partial or complete hoard, or a collection assembled from multiple sources, the fact that it includes *mashaka* fractional coins, which are adhered to coins from the final phases of the main series, demonstrates that these types circulated alongside one another from the beginning of Mauryan rule through to the end of the dynasty and its punchmarked coinage.

Coin images



Coin 1



Coin 2



Coin 3



Coin 4



Coin 5



Coin 6



Coin 7



Coin 8



Coin 9



Coin 10



Coin 11



Coin 12



Coin 13



Coin 14



Coin 15



Coin 16



Coin 17



Coin 18



Coin 19



Coin 20



Coin 21



Coin 22



Coin 23



Coin 24



Coin 25



Coin 26



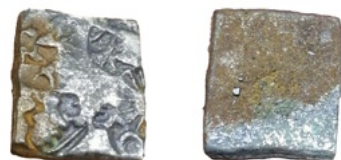
Coin 27



Coin 28



Coin 29



Coin 30



Coin 31



Coin 32



Coin 33



Coin 34



Coin 35



Coin 36



Coin 37



Coin 38



Coin 39



Coin 40



Coin 41



Coin 42



Coin 43



Coin 44



Coin 45



Coin 46



Coin 47



Coin 48



Coin 49



Coin 50



Coin 51



Coin 52



Coin 53



Coin 54



Coin 55



Coin 56



Coin 57



Coin 58



Coin 59



Coin 60



Coin 61



Coin 62



Coin 63



Coin 64



Coins 65 and 69



Coins 66 and 70



Coin 67



Coin 68

Coin 69 – attached to Coin 65 above

Coin 70 – attached to Coin 66 above



Mashaka 1b



Mashaka 2b



Mashaka 3b



Mashaka 4b



Mashaka 5b



Mashaka 6b



Mashaka 7b



Mashaka 8b



Mashaka 9b



Mashaka 10b



Mashaka 11b



Mashaka 12b



Mashaka 13b



Mashaka 14b

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Special thanks are given to Mikkel Hammelsvang for making the group accessible for study, and for providing photographs, measurements, and other information used in this paper. Likewise, thanks are extended to Osmund Bopearachchi and Robert Tye for their advice.

GRECO-BACTRIAN AND INDO-GREEK COINAGE – PART 1: NOTES ON THE COINS OF THE DIODOTIDS (SUPPLEMENT)

Heinz Gawlik

This is a short supplement to Part 1, the coinage of the Diodoti, published by me in JONS 242. A German private collection of Greco-Bactrian coins has since provided some new material that is included here.

Fig. 1SP1 shows a double-unit issued by Antiochos I. The coin is struck on a thick planchet and has a reddish-brown patina that is characteristic of Ai Khanoum. The coin shows the helmeted head of Pallas Athena right, and the standing Nike half-facing left, holding a wreath in right hand on reverse, flanked by the Greek legend *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ*.



Fig. 1SP1. Antiochos I Æ unit, 6.9 g

The unrecorded unit illustrated in Fig. 2SP1 features the head of Hermes and the standing Pallas Athena. The selected motifs are interesting, because these may have been adopted by Euthydemos I and features a complete denominational series of his bronze coinage.



Fig. 2SP1. Antiochos II Æ unit, 3.4 g, unlisted

Obverse: Head of Hermes right, wearing *petasos*

Reverse: Pallas Athena standing facing wearing long gown, holding a grounded shield in left hand and a spear in right hand, flanked by Greek legend *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ*

There may be a possibility that the coin in Fig. 2SP1 could be a modern fake. One will need to check this specimen in hand before coming to a conclusion.




Bordeaux lists a single drachm with control mark  and *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ* arranged below the raised right arm of Herakles as Groupe C5. The drachm illustrated in Fig. 3SP1 shows similar details as the drachm listed by Bordeaux, but the control mark  is a wreath below Zeus' left arm and the Greek letter *tau* in the left field between Herakles' body and *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ*.



Fig. 3SP1. Diodotos II (I) AR drachm, 3.9 g,  control unlisted (MIG Type 75-, BOP Série 7-, Kritt Series D-, BOR Series C5 var.)

Obverse: Diademed head of king right

Reverse: Nude Zeus advancing left, hurling thunderbolt with right hand, aegis draped over left arm, small eagle standing left





Fig. 4SP1 shows an unlisted hemi-drachm with control mark  issued in the name of Diodotos, but the monogram  is uncertain. Bordeaux lists a single drachm with control mark   for Groupe C10. The details of the illustrated hemi-drachm match those of the illustrated drachm and the coin might be also a specimen of BOR Groupe C10.



Fig. 4SP1. Diodotos II (I) AR hemi-drachm, 1.9 g,  , unlisted

Note

It has been pointed out to me that 13 specimens in Part 1 published in JONS 242 may be modern fakes. These all look like they have been made by the same hand: Fig. 3 (Coin A); Fig. 39 (Coins A2 and A3); Fig. 40; Fig. 44; Fig. 46 (Coin A2); Fig. 47 (Coin A4); Fig. 48 (Coin A1); Fig. 49; Fig. 56 (Coin A2); Fig. 57; Fig. 59; and Fig. 61 (Coin A).

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HEAVY LEAD COINAGE OF THE MITRA KINGS OF ANCIENT PUNJAB

Karan Singh

Lead is an interesting metal in ancient Indian numismatics. It is not used everywhere in the Indian subcontinent: some cultures issued coins in lead, but most preferred silver and copper. Lead was popular in central India and the Deccan after the decline of the Mauryan empire (Pieper 2013: 51); in Gujarat under the Kshatrapas and Guptas; and in western India during the post-Gupta period.

This paper will examine the brief early use of lead in north-western India, specifically in the Punjab. A few Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and tribal coin types were issued in this metal. These are all rare and possibly indicate a local source of the metal.

We know of a few rulers in this region with names ending in 'mitra', who issued copper coins with Kharoshthi legends, which weighed 2.52 g on average (Allan 1936: 125-128). In 2006, Devendra Handa published the first lead coins with such names: four small specimens with the legends *Gomitasa* (Gomitra) and *Bishnumitasa* (Vishnumitra) respectively (Fig. 1). Their find-spot was the ancient city of Srughna (modern-day Sugh) (Cunningham 1963: 92), lying at the eastern edge of Punjab, in the modern state of Haryana (Handa 2006: 95-98). Nothing is known of these kings, but it is assumed that they were local rulers in Sugh who were the successors of the Kadas whose coins are also found at Sugh (Handa 2006: 97). From the fabric of the small lead coins and their Brahmi legends, these Mitras appear to be distinct from the dynasty that issued the round copper coins with Kharoshthi legends. Rulers' names ending in 'mitra' were common in the Early Historic period, and the fabric and script of these coins show no similarity.

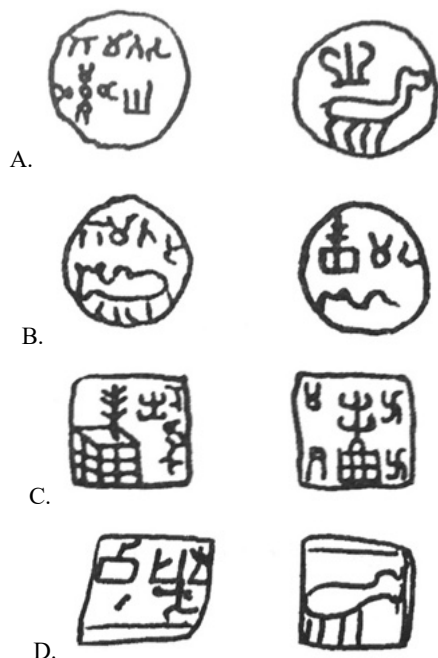


Fig. 1. Lead coins of Gomitra (A-C) and Vishnumitra (D), illustrated by Handa (2006)

In 2015, Handa added a fifth specimen, a square lead coin of Gomitra weighing 5.36 g (2015: 23). It was found in Charan, 80 km north-west of the modern city of Chandigarh (see Fig. 5). According to Handa, "The square shape indicates that it was the

earliest coin of the Mitras of the Punjab, as all coins of the other known rulers are round in shape" (Handa 2015: 24).

The present paper adds three more square lead coins from the author's collection to the corpus of known coins of the Mitra kings. Importantly, these are heavy coins, showing that these kings issued larger denominations as well. The first specimen is around three times the weight of Handa's specimen (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Vishnumitra lead coin, 15.48 g, 22 mm

Obverse: Elephant advancing left, with Brahmi legend *Vinhumitasa* above

Reverse: Tree-in-railing at left; hill made of 10 pellets at right; taurine below centre; and wavy line (representing a river or snake) at bottom

The legend reads *Vinhumitasa* (Vishnumitra); the palaeography is quite different to the *Bishnumitasa* from Sugh (Fig. 1D), so this is probably a different Vishnumitra. According to Handa, the distinctive hill on the reverse indicates a strong link with the coinage of Taxila (private communication).



Fig. 3. Bhumimitra lead coin, 6.93 g

Obverse: Elephant standing right, with Brahmi legend *Bhumimitasa* above

Reverse: Bull standing right; tree-in-railing at right



Fig. 4. Gomitra lead coin, 7.47 g

Obverse: Elephant advancing right; *srivatsa* and miscellaneous symbols above

Reverse: Tree-in-railing at right, with Brahmi legend *Gomitasa* above; miscellaneous symbols in central field

It is important to note that while the three new specimens are certainly Mitra coins, it is not clear whether these heavy coins are from the same dynasty as the Mitras of Sugh, whose coins were lighter in weight. The three heavy coins illustrated here may represent a parallel series issued in eastern Punjab.

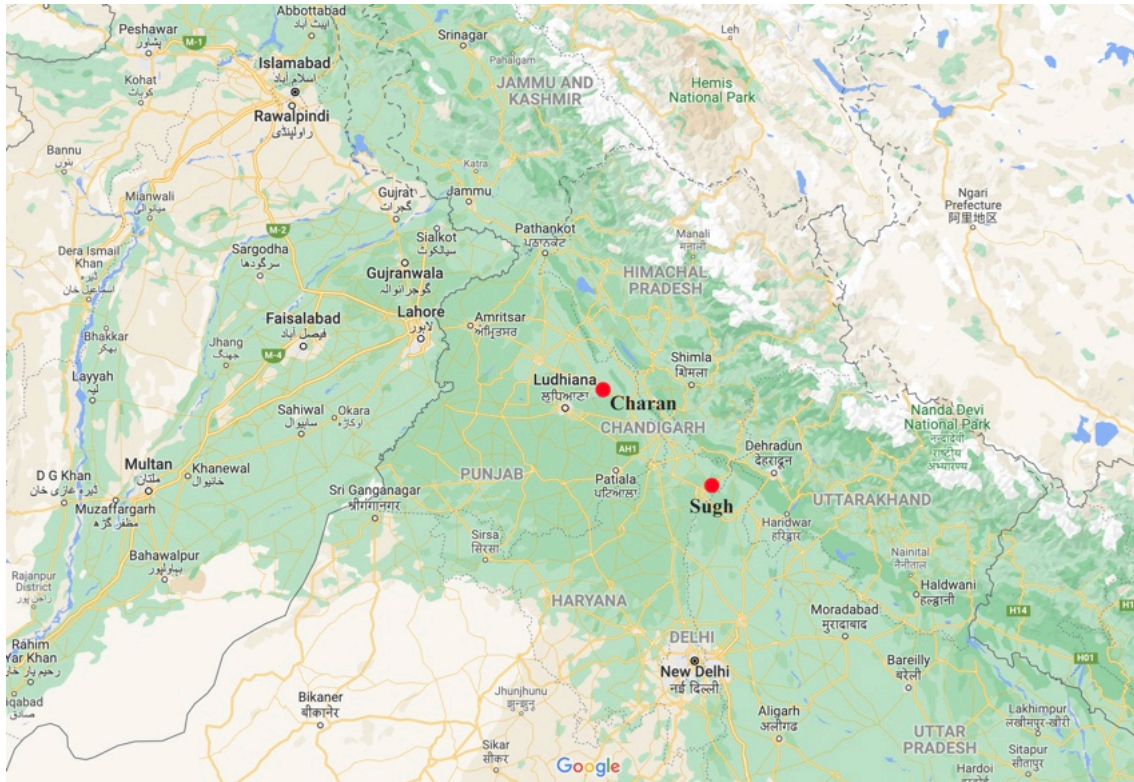


Fig. 5. Map showing two find-spots of Mitra lead coins recorded by Handa (2006, 2015) (based on Google Maps)



Fig. 1B Fig. 2 Fig. 3
Fig. 6. Comparison of letter 'mi'

Fig. 6 compares the letter *mi* seen on a specimen of Gomitra from Sugh (Handa 2006: 96, no. 3) with the *mi* on the coins of Vishnumitra (Fig. 2) and Bhumimitra (Fig. 3) presented here. The similarity in palaeography suggests a geographical proximity with Sugh.

Conclusion

This paper has added two more kings, Vishnumitra and Bhumimitra, to the list of known Mitra kings. Their lead coins are very rare, with just 8 specimens known so far (Table A). It is possible that the use of lead and of Brahmi legends was a regional characteristic of eastern Punjab, representing an indigenous numismatic tradition, while the copper coins with Kharoshthi legends known previously were part of the numismatic tradition of western Punjab that developed in response to Indo-Greek coinage.

Table A. List of Mitra lead specimens (in alphabetical order)

No.	Name of king	Shape	Weight
1	Bhumimitra	Square	6.93 g
2	Gomitra	Round	n/a
3	Gomitra	Round	n/a
4	Gomitra	Square	n/a
5	Gomitra	Square	5.36 g
6	Gomitra	Square	7.47 g
7	Vishnumitra (Bishnumitasa)	Square	n/a
8	Vishnumitra (Vinhumitasa)	Square	15.48 g

Acknowledgements

This paper is based on my talk at the ONS meeting held in Oxford on August 11, 2018. I wish to thank Shailen Bhandare for reading the legends on these heavy lead coins. All the coin photos are from my collection. I wish to thank Devendra Handa for allowing me to reproduce the line drawings of the four specimens in his 2006 book.

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A NEW INITIAL OF A KING OF SAMATATA

Md. Shariful Islam and Md. Shamsuddin

Samatata and its coinage remain less studied and we have limited data with which to write a complete history of the region. According to Mitchiner, less emphasis has been given by researchers on areas such as Samatata, as a geopolitical region and time, compared to the Islamic period of Bengal, “partly because the history and coinage of this period can be most readily documented”, while on other areas “there remains ample scope for debate” (Mitchiner 2000: 6). The fall of the Gupta empire in the 6th century pushed Bengal, and especially the Samatata kingdom, into a ‘dark period’ (Rhodes 2016: 10), and only a few types of coins, copper plates,¹ and the accounts of some Chinese Buddhist monks, such as Hsuan Tsang (Chowdhury, 2018: 531), who visited this region and wrote about their visit, shine some light on the history of this region during this period. Therefore, it is difficult to write anything with concrete evidence and mostly we have to rely on conjecture based on fragmented data.

Nicholas Rhodes intended to sew threads on the coinage of this region based on the series of gold coins issued in Samatata (2002: 1-12), and this is still a good foundation for any research to start with on Samatata. S.K. Bose and Noman Nasir added some more data in the series (2016: 158). This paper adds a coin with a new initial (Coin 1) and intends to look at the series from a different angle, so that the cause of issuing coins from this region without kings’ name or with a single letter initial or partly inscribed names can be explained.



Coin 1. An early type Samatata gold coin with a new initial

Coin 1 fits in the Group B2 of Nicholas Rhodes (2016: 12) and is earlier than the coins with initial *Pa* placed in his Group C. B2 bears *Sri/Sna/Nla*,² while Bose and Nasir show a type with initial *Sa* (2016: 155, no. SAM4.1). The initial inscribed below the arm of the king on Coin 1 differs from *Sa* or *Sri/Sna/Nla*. The initial on this coin is analysed and explored later in this paper.

Background

Rhodes wrote in his 2016 paper (ed. Wolfgang Bertsch) that it would give ‘some food for thought’ to any historian or numismatist ‘who seeks to push forward the boundaries of knowledge in the neglected area’ (2016: 10). Here, by the term ‘neglected area’, Rhodes indicated that Samatata has received little attention from researchers³ towards studying its coinage and history.

It is not clear whether Samatata formed a part of the Mauryan Empire, though it is likely that south-east Bengal “maintained a separate political entity or entities” (Islam 2018: 551). According to R.C. Majumdar, the Imperial Guptas had a far stronger hold over Gauda than over Samatata (1971: 45). From Samudragupta’s Allahabad inscription, we know that Samatata

was a frontier kingdom that became a tributary state of the Guptas (Islam 2018: 551). The region then remained under the rule of the “Later Gupta Kings, who might not have been connected by blood with the Imperial Guptas” (Chowdhury 2018: 530). Samatata gained the status of an independent kingdom during the Khadga dynasty in the late 7th to early 8th century CE (Islam 2018: 583-595). Prior to this, the region was occasionally or mostly ruled by tributaries of overlords of other regions (Islam 2018: 573, 582). D.C. Sircar believed the Ratas were the feudal kings of Samatata (1947: 240), but Shariful Islam argues on the basis of “new epigraphic and numismatic sources” that Jivadharana and Sridharana Rata were independent rulers, who established an independent kingdom during the second half of the 7th century, that included Samatata and some part of Vanga (2018: 553).

Samatata must have had important trading links, as can be presumed from the large quantity of gold coins discovered in this region despite it having no gold mines. Gold probably arrived here through trade from the mining regions of upper Burma-Yunnan (Mitchiner 2000: 45). The Samatata kingdom was centred around Comilla and extended to west and east, towards Dhaka and into part of Tripura (Figure 1). It became an important economic area because it managed to control the trade route between the sea at Chittagong and Kamarupa (Assam). This explains Samatata’s importance in trade and its wealth.

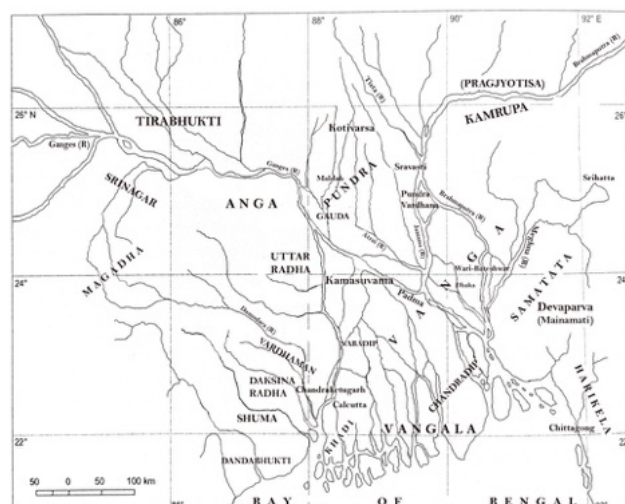


Fig. 1. Political map of Samatata and neighbouring kingdoms (reproduced from Islam 2018: 558)


Analysis of the Gold Coinage of Samatata

While imitations of Kushan coins are considered the first series of gold coinage issued in Samatata (Rhodes 2016: 11, Group A), this paper starts from the next series, which appears to have been influenced by Gupta coinage. The reason is that Coin 1 of this paper is relevant to the later series. By analysing the style of the gold coins of Samatata, it is evident that Coin 1 is similar to coin B2, inscribed *Su*, misread as *Ma* or *Sa* in Rhodes’ paper (2016: 12), and is therefore earlier than his Group C. If we ignore coins of independent kings from other kingdoms, such as Sasanka, the Chandra kings, or *Sri Kumara* of Kamarupa, it is evident that *Gopa* (Gopachandra), *Jiva* (Jivadharanarata) and *Sri* (Sridharanarata) were the kings who first started displaying their names on coins, using the first syllable or first and second syllables of their name. The rulers of the Khadga dynasty that followed began to display their full names on their coins.


Before *Gopa* and the Rata kings of Samatata, the gold coins displayed only a single letter, perhaps also the initial letters of their issuers name, such as *Su*, *Sū* *Pra*, and *Bha*. Earlier than this series of single letter initials, Samatata coins did not bear any initials indicating the kings (see Coin 2) (*ibid.*). It indicates that the kings of this region, with some exceptions, gradually


adopted the practice of displaying their names on their coins. This may have been associated with a growing degree of sovereignty. Table A presents the series of gold coinage of Samatata (except the early Kushan imitation type).

Table A. Gold coins of Samatata, following the early Kushan imitations

Groups by Rhodes	Numbering by Bose and Nasir	Images of coins
Group A (A1)	SAM3.2	
		Coin 2: Samatata early series of gold coin without name or initial of the issuing authority or king (MSI)
	SAM4.1	
		Coin 3: Samatata gold coin with initial, most likely <i>Su</i> (MS)
Group B (B2)	SAM4.2	
		Coin 4: Samatata gold coin with initial, most likely <i>Sū</i> (TW)

According to Rhodes, “The letters in the fields of some coins, for example *Ma* or *Sa* on no. B2, may represent the initial letter of the name of a king such as Samachara Deva, a known late sixth century post-Gupta ruler of Bengal” (2016: 12). This is only plausible if Samachara Deva had not wanted to display his full name on the coins, which is unlikely as he was an independent king.

Group C (C3)	SAM7.1	
		Coin 5: Samatata gold coin with initial <i>Pra</i> (MSI)


Group C (C1)	SAM6.1	
		Coin 6: Samatata gold coin with name <i>Gopa</i> (TW)

Gopa can perhaps be identified with a post-Gupta king of Vanga, *Gopachandra*, who is known from at least three copper plates inscriptions (Islam and Nasreen 2014: 31-37). It is presumed that *Gopachandra*, who took the title *Maharajadhiraja*, was a powerful ruler of Vanga, whose kingdom extended over the south-eastern and western parts of Bengal, and even into Orissa (Bose and Nasir 2016: 158).






Group D	SAM10.1	
		Coin 7: Samatata gold coin of <i>Sasanka</i> (MS)
Group E	SAM9.2	
		Coin 8: Samatata gold coin of <i>Vara Chandra/Vandra</i> (MS)

Rhodes suggests that the king on Coin 8 was *Vara Chandra* of Arakan and that it indicated a temporary conquest of Samatata by the Chandra dynasty of Arakan (Rhodes 2016: 13, Group A). It is not unlikely that this event took place and the Chandra king issued gold coins in his own name in the style of Samatata coinage. It should be noted that here the *ch* of *Chandra* looks more like *v*, and there is no indication of an *a* vowel on the initial *V*.

After coins of *Vara Chandra/Vandra*, Bose and Nasir place coins of Sasanka (Coin 7) and confirm Comilla as the find-spot of a few of his coins. Due to the unique feature of these coins with a dotted border, the authors infer that these coins of Sasanka were issued from Samatata. The coins of *Vira Chandra/Vandra*, Sasanka, and the next coin of *Sri Kumara* (Coin 9), show that at that time there was a political conflict in this region and powerful kings of neighbouring kingdoms issued coins in their name from Samatata. According to Susmita Basu-Majumdar, "Samatata being a vibrant economic zone attracted neighbouring political powers who tried to have a representative ruler or vassal ruling over Samatata at least during the first half of the seventh century." (2018: 251). An important feature of these gold coins is that they carry the full names of the kings.

Group F	SAM12.1	
		Coin 9: Samatata gold coin with name <i>Sri Kumara</i> (MSI)

After *Sri Kumara*, Rhodes places coins of the *Rata* dynasty, whose kings inscribed their full names on their coins (Coins 10 and 11). Then came the rulers of the Khadga dynasty, whom sources mention as independent rulers of Samatata. We also find their names in full on their coins (Coin 12).











Group H	SAM14.1	
		Coin 10: Samatata gold coin with name <i>Sri Jiva</i> (MS)
Group I	SAM15.1	
		Coin 11: Samatata gold coin with name <i>Sri Sri</i> (MSI)
Group J	SAM16.1	
		Coin 12: Samatata gold coin with name of the king <i>Sri Rajabhata</i> (MSI)
Group K	SAM17.1	
		Coin 13: Samatata gold coin with name of the king <i>Sri Balabhata</i> (MS)
Group L	SAM18.1	
		Coin 14: Samatata gold coin with name of the king <i>Sri Sarvandada</i> (MS)




The legend on Coin 14 clearly reads *Sarvandada*, though Rhodes prefers to read the legend as *Sarvabhata* and Bose and Nasir as *Sarvanada*. On the obverse, on the left side of the standing king, below his arm, there is *Pra* inscribed; on the left side of his head, there is *Sri*. Therefore, here *Sri* and *Pra* are both salutations to the king. Now, the *Pra* on this coin raises a question on the purpose of the initial *Pra* on Coin 5 – that may not be an initial of the king's name, but a salutation too.

Analysis of the initial on Coin 1

From the style of Coin 1, we can place it in the group of early type of Samatata gold coins, Type B2, and before Group C as classified by Rhodes. If so, our Coin 1 was probably issued in the 5th or 6th century CE. The initials, or kings' names, seen on the coins in this series, and their probable time of issue, have been presented in the following table.

Table B. Rulers' initials seen on Samatata gold coinage

Coin no. and Group	Dating of coin	Initial/ name on coin	Legend
Coin 1	5 th -6 th century		<i>A(n)</i>
Coin 3	5 th -6 th century		<i>Su</i>
Coin 4/ Group B/	5 th -6 th century		<i>Sū</i>
Coin 5/ Group C	Early 7 th century		<i>Pra</i>
Coin 6/ Group C	Early 7 th century		<i>Gopa</i>
Coin 7/ Group D	Early 7 th century		<i>Sri/sa/sa(n)ka</i>
Coin 8/ Group E	Early 7 th century		<i>Vara/Chandra or Vara/Vandra</i>
Coin 9/ Group F	Mid 7 th century		<i>Sri Ku/mara</i>
Coin 10/ Group H	Mid 7 th century		<i>Jiva</i>
Coin 11/ Group I	Late 7 th century		<i>Sri</i>

Coin 12/ Group J	Late 7 th century		<i>Raja/Bhata</i>
Coin 13/ Group K	Late 7 th century		<i>Bala/Bhata</i>
Coin 14/ Group L	Late 7 th century (?)		<i>Sarva/Ndada</i>

Though Rhodes has placed Groups A and B in the 6th century, with the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta including Samatata within the Gupta empire, it is not unlikely that coins of Groups A and B belong to the later part of the Gupta dynasty. That is why we prefer to place the coins of Groups A and B in the 5th to 6th century. Though Coins 1, 3 and 4 presumably belong to the 5th-6th centuries, the initial on Coin 1 is clearly different from that on Coins 3 and 4.

Table C lists the relevant letters used in Bengal during the 5-6th centuries, so that the initials on these coins can be compared. The initials on Coins 3 and 4 resemble *Su* of the 5th-6th centuries. In the case of Coin 1, the initial resembles *A(n)* of the 6th century or *Rri* of the 5th century, though the former is believed to be the right reading.

Bangla Script	Brahmi (3rd Century BCE) Maurya	Brahmi of (1st century CE)	Kūṣāṇa	Northern Brahmi (5th Century CE) Gupta	Siddhamātrikā (6th Century CE) Post-Gupta	Kuṭila (7th Century CE) Khadga- Rāta and the Early Deva	Gaudī (8th Century CE) Pala	Proto-Bāṅgā (10th Century CE) Pala-Candra	Proto-Bāṅgā (11th Century CE) Sena-Varmān	Bāṅgā (12th century CE) Later Deva	Bāṅgā (13th-14th Centuries CE) From the Manuscripts	Bāṅgā (15th Century CE) From Manuscripts
অ <i>A(n)</i>	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧
ঋ <i>Rri</i>				𑀧	𑀧	𑀧			𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧
ম <i>Ma</i>	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧
স <i>Sa</i>	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧
ন <i>Na</i>	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧	𑀧

Table C. List of relevant letters of early regional Bengal (reconstructed from Islam 2018: 614-617)

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, by style this coin falls within Group B2 and before Group C. In the coinage of these groups, there was a practice of using the initial letter of the name of the king on the obverse. Coin 1 also has an initial of the ruler, which appears to be the unpublished initial *A(v)*. We could not identify the king himself, but can presume that it was issued by a king with the initial *A(v)*. As the king likely used this initial letter to represent him on the coin and not his full name on the coin, we can also suggest that this ruler may have been a tributary of a superior king of the time, perhaps a Gupta emperor. The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, as well as the use of terms like *Brhatparamesvara* by the rulers of Samatata to indicate the presence of an overlord of the rulers of the region (Basu-Majumdar 2018: 251-252), supports this argument.

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Sources of images

MSI Md. Shariful Islam
MS Md. Shamsuddin
TW Todywalla Auctions

References

1. Copper plates have been discovered in different places, such as Jayarampur (Pal 2015: 65), Mallasarul, Ghugrahati, Kurapala, Ramashila (Islam 2018: 563), as well as Kailan and Udisvara (Islam 2018: 572). Also important are the Tippera copper plate, the Kalapur copper plate in Maulvibazar (Islam 2018: 580-581), the Mainamati copper plate of Balabhatta, the Ashrafpur copper plate of Jatakhadga, and the four copper plates of Devakhadga (Islam 2018: 584-588).
2. Bose and Nasir list *Sri* [SAM4.4] and *Bha* [SAM4.3], *Sa* [SAM4.1] and *Sta* or *Sna* [SAM4.2]. Joe Cribb believes they are right about the first two legends, but he would prefer to read the last two as *Sū* [SAM4.1] and *Sū* [SAM4.2] (private communication).
3. A few important works on this region are Mukherjee (1989 and 1993) and Mitchiner (1998 and 2000).

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A NOTE ON THE NEWLY- DISCOVERED COIN AND ITS CONTEXT IN THE SAMATAṬA GOLD COIN SERIES

Joe Cribb

The newly-discovered gold coin (page 13) can be placed in the sequence of Samataṭa coinage precisely, because of the design features it exhibits (see Table A). This sequence is based on the work I presented at the 15th conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Europe at Leiden in July 1999, at a meeting of the ONS in November 1999, and at the Royal Numismatic Society in March 2000, and which has since been established through the examination of over 700 Samataṭa coins from museum and private collections. The sequence has been constructed from the progressive changes in minor details appearing on the coins. The same process has also been referred to by Susmita Basu-Majumdar (2009). The resulting sequence is similar in many respects to those established by Nicholas Rhodes (2002, 2016), Michael Mitchiner (2000 and 2004), and S.K. Bose and Noman Nasir (2016) using a similar, but smaller data set. The inscribed Samataṭa coinage follows an extensive coinage of uninscribed gold coins current in the same kingdom (Basu-Majumdar 2014: 588-589), initially copying (Bose and Nasir 2016: Types SAM1A.1-5), then adapting (*ibid.*: SAM1B.1-2, C.1-2, D.1 and E.1-3) Kushan coins designs and subsequently adapting Gupta coin designs (*ibid.*: SAM2.1-5). These were followed by a series with similar features to the early inscribed coins, but without Brahmi inscriptions (*ibid.* SAM3.1-13).

In these earlier series and in the inscribed series, subtle changes in design are continually taking place, such as the treatment of the conch standard, the shape of the king's head, the use of bars in the border of dots, etc. The bars in the border, for example, start to disappear during the coinages of Śaśāṅka and Śrī Kumara. This allows the coinage of Śrī Varacandra to be placed in the same period, as most of his coins share the king's pointed hem with Śrī Kumara, but one of his coins has the curved hem seen on earlier coins which always have the bars in the border. The pseudo legend of Śrī Varacandra and Śrī Kumara are also the same, but different from that on most earlier coins. One of the earlier types, inscribed *pra*, with the curved hem and bars in the border of the earlier series, also shares the form of pseudo-legend found on the coins of Śrī Varacandra and Śrī Kumara, suggesting that it is the last of the earlier coins. These and other features help to create this sequence throughout the Samataṭa coinage. The sequence cannot be completely relied upon as the coins at the end of the sequence, with the inscriptions *aṅga* and *vālamṛgāṅka*, redeploy aspects of the early coins, such as the curved hem and the bars in the border, so are returning to earlier design features, even though the content and style of the inscription places them much later. It cannot be ruled out that other series employ features which belong to earlier series. Nevertheless, a broad overview of the sequence can be established taking all features into account. The only coinage which cannot be fixed more precisely is that of Śaśāṅka, because it uses different designs. The bars in the border show roughly where to place it, but whether it precedes or follows Śrī Varacandra and Śrī Kumara cannot be demonstrated.

Chronology of the Samataṭa gold series

When trying to fix the chronology of the coins, the sequence (Table A) allows the coinage to be keyed by external evidence JONS Vol. 244, Summer 2021

(Table B). We have a fairly clear idea of the dating of Śaśāṅka – c. 590-625 CE – from his inscriptions, contemporary literature (Islam 2018: 531-536), and allusions to him by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang (Li 1996: 142, 192, 226, 246 and 249). Xuanzang visited Samataṭa while in India (c. 640 CE; *ibid.*: 301-302) and referred to Śaśāṅka as a ruler in Bengal in the recent past. Xuanzang also met the king of Kāmarūpa (Assam) called Bhaskavarman (c. 620-650) who was also known as Śrī Kumara (*ibid.*: 299-301). If the coins inscribed Śrī Kumara were issued by this king, then they can be dated immediately after the issues of Śaśāṅka, and this seems likely as both the Śaśāṅka's coins and the Śrī Kumara coins were issued both with and without bars in the border. There is another king of Kāmarūpa called Śrī Kumara three kings later (Barua Bahadur 1966: 70), so this attribution has to remain conjectural, even though it is highly likely. Whatever the solution to this question, the Śrī Kumara coins should be dated in the 7th century.

Two other Chinese pilgrims visited Samataṭa later in the 7th century. One of them, Yijing, wrote a record of his visit (Lahiri 1986: 84-85). He described another Chinese monk Sengzhe being entertained in Samataṭa by the local king. This took place before Yijing visited Samataṭa as Sengzhe was no longer there. Yijing was in Samataṭa between 673 and 687, so the reference to the Samataṭa king must be placed before 687. The king of Samataṭa in this account is named Heluoshebazha 曷羅社跋吒, pronounced *yāt-lā-ḥja-bwāt-ṭa at this period (Schuessler 2009: nos. 21-1, 18-10, 1-36, 21-31, 2-22). The end of the name is clearly a rendering of -bhaṭa, and the closest Indian name to match the first part is Harṣa, so perhaps a king called Harṣabhata. Most modern historians have ignored the Chinese text and identified this king as the one who issued coins inscribed Rājabhata (10A) and who seems to have been referred to as Rājārāja, son of Devakhaḍga, in one of the inscriptions of the Khaḍga kings (Islam 2018: 587-578). In reality, all one can say is that this Harṣabhata is likely to be the name of one of the Khaḍga kings, because another son of Devakhaḍga is referred to in the same inscription as Balabhata. The coins have four Bhaṭa names which can be identified with the Khaḍga dynasty of Samataṭa: Rājabhata (10A), Prithubhata (10B), Sarvabhata (11A) and Balabhata (11B). Although the Chinese pilgrim is clearly referring to a member of the same dynasty, it is difficult to understand how to interpret this source in terms of the chronology of the Samataṭa coins. The only clear determination of the context of these coins is that they follow two other royal issues in the names of Śrī Jīva and Śrī Śrī. B.N. Mukherjee (1960) long ago showed that these two issuers should be identified as Śrī Jīvadhāraṇrāta and Śrī Śrīdhāraṇrāta, who were named as rulers of Samataṭa in several inscriptions (Islam 2012; 2018: 572-579). Attempts to date these rulers from their inscriptions have not been convincingly achieved (*ibid.*: 579), but their coins place them soon after Śaśāṅka and Śrī Kumara, so in the second half of the 7th century. The most likely context therefore for Harṣabhata is during or soon after the Rata kings, perhaps before the coins of Rajabhata.

If my suggestion that the final series of Samataṭa style coins (Series 13; Rhodes 2016: Group N; Bose and Nasir 2016: Type 20), inscribed *śrī vālamṛgāṅka*, are issues of the Pālas is accepted, then one would expect the Khaḍga rulers named on the coins to have finished their issues in the second half of the 8th century. Their attribution to the Palas is based on the similarity of their reverses to the two known Pala gold coins (Tandon 2006: 331; Bose and Nasir 2016: 177). Their attribution to the Deva kings (Islam 2018: 596-609) by Mukherjee (1993: 31-32) was based on his misreading of *vālamṛgāṅka* as [va]ṅgalamṛgāṅka (a term used by the Devas), misreading the *ja* between the king's legs as the initial *va*. This

attribution has been repeated by others, but is not evidenced by any of the coins of this series.

The attribution of the coins of Varacandra/Varavandra to an Arakanese king Viracandra by Rhodes (2016: 13; Basu Majumdar 2014: 592, 2016: 252) is appealing, but the coins clearly say *varacandra* or *varavandra*, and on Arakanese Viracandra the long *ī* in his name is always clearly marked (Mahlo 2012: 81). These coins are stylistically close to the coins of Śrī Kumara and Vijaya, the Kāmarūpa kings who issued Samatāta style coins, so their issuer is from the early to mid-7th century and perhaps connected to the Kāmarūpa kingdom. Arakanese Viracandra should be dated long after his forerunner Devacandra (there are five other coin issuers, supposedly ruling for 98 years, in between [Mahlo 2012: 88]), who issued coins closely related to the early 7th century coins

of Śaśāṅka and of his contemporary, the Cambodian king Īśānavarman (c. 611-635 CE) (Cribb 1986 and 2013), so somewhat later than the position allocated to Varacandra in the Samatāta sequence.

The Buddhist issue featuring the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and inscribed *ratnatraya* (the three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma [law] and Saṅgha [monastic community]), also appears to be from Samatāta, as it shares its border, fabric, size and debased fineness with the coins of Rajabhāṭa (Deyell 2011). The inscription links this coin with the triple stupas known as Kutila Mura (Chakrabarti 1992: 128-131) at Mainamati, which seem to be referred to as the Ratnatraya in inscriptions from the site. The king of Samatāta is also described by the Chinese pilgrim Yijing as a devotee of the three jewels (Lahiri 1986: 85).

Table A. Main types and inscribed varieties of Samatāta gold dinars, showing progression of designs

Series															
1	Imitations of Kanishka I gold dinars														
2	Adaptations of Gupta gold dinars														
3	Samatata gold dinaras without inscriptions														
	inscription						king's head	king's halo	śrī	toes	pseudo-legend	B&N	NGR		
	by head	under arm	additional letters/ marks	king's skirt hems	border	standard						2016	2002	2016	
4A.1		śrī		curved	bar	conch A	a	halo	1		A	4.4	B.x		
4B.1		bha		curved	bar	conch A	a	none			A	4.3	B.9		
4C.1		sū		curved	bar	conch A	a	halo			A	4.2	B.12	B.2	
4C.2		su		curved	bar	conch A	a	halo			A	4.1	B10-1		
4C.3*		a		curved	bar	conch A	a	halo			A	-	B.x		
4D.1	śrī		horse/pot	curved	bar	conch A	a	none	2/3	a	A	5.1	C.13-4		
4D.2	śrī	da	horse	curved	bar	conch A	a	none	3	a	A	5.3	C.16-7		
4D.3	śrī	dama	horse	curved	bar	conch A	a	halo	3	a	A	5.2	C.15		
4D.4	śrī	da	rayed device	curved	bar	conch A	a	halo	3	a	A	3.13	C.x		
4E.1		gopa		curved	bar	conch A	a	halo	-	a	B	6.1	C.x	C.1	
4F.1		pra		curved	bar	conch A	a	halo	-	a	C	7.1	C.18	C.2	
5A.1		ja		curved	bar	conch A	b	halo	-	a	X	8.1	x		
6A.1		śrī śaśāṅka	saka		bar				4	-	-	10.2	D.19		
6A.2		śrī śaśāṅka	jaya		bar				4	-	-	10.3	D.x		
6A.3		śrī śaśāṅka	śrī ja		bar				4	-	-	10.1	D.20	D	
6A.4		śrī śaśāṅka	śrī ja		none				4	-	-	10.1	D.21		
6A.5		śrī śaśāṅka	vipha		none				4	-	-	10.3	D.x		
6A.5		śrī śaśāṅka	viskaga		none				4	-	-	10.3	D.x		
7A.1	śrī	varacandrah		curved	bar	conch A	c	none	4	a	C	9.2	E.22	E.1	
7A.2	śrī	varacandra		pointed	bar	conch A	c	none	4	a	C	9.1	E.23-4	E.2	
7B.1		śrī kumara		pointed	bar	conch A	c	none	5	b	C	12.1	F.25		
7B.2		śrī kumara	śrīvatsa	pointed	bar	conch A	c	none	5/6	b	C	12.4	F.x		
7B.3		śrī kumara	cakra	pointed	bar	conch A	c	none	5/6	b	C	12.2	F.26-7	F	
7B.4		śrī kumara	cakra +	pointed	bar	conch A	c	none	6	b	C/D	12.3	F.28-9		
7B.5		śrī kumara	crescent	pointed	none	conch A	c	none	6	b	D	12.4	F.x		
7C.1		śrī vijaya		pointed	none	conch A	c	none	5	b	C	13.1	x		
8A.1	śrī	cakra		pointed	none	cakra?	c	halo	6	b	-	11.1	G.31	G	
9A.1	śrī	jīva		pointed	none	conch A/C	c/d	halo	5/6	b	D	14.1-3	H. 32-5	H	
9B.1	śrī	śrī		split hem	none	conch C	c/d	halo	5/6	b	D/E	15.1	I. 30, 37-40	I	
9B.2	śrī	śrī/	śa bhi	pointed	none	conch C	d	halo	6	b	E	15.2-4	I.36		
10A.1	śrī	rājabhaṭa	śa bhi	pointed	none	conch C	d	halo	7	c	E	16.1	J.x	J.1-2	
10A.2	śrī	rājabhaṭa		pointed	none	conch C	d/e	halo	7	c	E/F	16.2	J.41		
10B.1	śrī	prīthubhaṭa	ja	pointed	none	conch C	e	none	7	c	F	19.2	M.44	M	
10B.2	śrī	prīthubhaṭa		pointed	none	cakra?	e	none	7	c	F	19.3	M.x		
10B.3	śrī	prīthubhaṭa	pra	pointed	none	conch C	f	none	8	d	G	19.1	M.x		
11A.1	śrī	sarvvabhaṭa	ja	pointed	none	conch C	e	none	7	c	F	18.x	L.x		
11A.2	śrī	sarvvabhaṭa	ri?	pointed	none	conch C	e	none	7	d	F	18.x	L.x		
11A.3	śrī	sarvandada	pra	pointed	none	bull	f	none	8	d	G	18.1	L.43	L	
11B.1	śrī	valabhaṭa		pointed	none	bull	f	none	8	d	G	17.1-2	K.42	K	
12A.1	śrī	aṅga	u da	curved	bar	Conch Ax	g	none	9	a	Ax	20.6	x		
13A.2	śrī	vālamrgāṅka	jaya/jajja	curved	bar	Crescent	h	none	9	e	-	20.1	N.x		
13A.3	śrī	vālamrgāṅka	de/jajja	curved	bar	Crescent	h	none	9	e	-	20.2	N.43	N	
13A.4	śrī	vālamrgāṅka	go/ka	curved	bar	Crescent	h	none	9	e	-	20.4	N.x		
13A.5	śrī	vālamrgāṅka	go/de	curved	bar	Crescent	h	none	9	e	-	20.3	N.x		
13A.6	śrī	vālamrgāṅka	su/ja	curved	bar	Crescent	h	none	9	e	-	20.5	N.x		
14A.1		ratmatraya	Bodhisattva/cow and calf (Devell 2011)										21.1	x	

* = the new coin; B&N = Bose and Nasir 2016; NGR = Rhodes 2002 and 2016

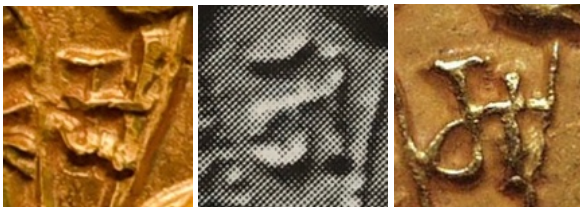
Table B. Approximate chronology of the gold coins of Samatāṭa

Series	Rhodes	Bose and Nasir	Category	Name	Inscription	Approximate dates (CE)
1		1	Kanishka imitations			3 rd -4 th century
2		2	Gupta imitations		<i>jaya/ śrī</i>	4 th -5 th century
3	A	3	Samatata uninscribed			5 th -6 th century
4	B	4	early inscribed, uncertain issuers		<i>śrī</i>	6 th century
					<i>bha</i>	
					<i>sū</i>	
					<i>su</i>	
					<i>a</i>	
	C	5			<i>da/dama</i> (horse)	
		6		Gopacandra?	<i>gopa</i>	
		7		Pradyumnabandhu?*	<i>pra</i>	
5	-	8			<i>ja</i>	
6	D	10	Gauḍa king	Śaśaṅka	<i>śrī śaśaṅka</i>	c. 590-625
7	E	9	Kāmarūpa kings	Varacandra?	<i>śrī varacandra[h]</i>	
	F	12		Bhaskarvarman?	<i>śrī kumara</i>	c. 620-650
	-	13		Vijaya	<i>śrī vijaya</i>	
8	G	11		Cakra?	<i>śrī cakra</i>	
9	H	14	Rata dynasty	Jivadhāraṇrāta	<i>śrī jīva</i>	c. 660-690
	I	15		Śrīdhāraṇrāta	<i>śrī śrī</i>	
10	J	16	Khadga dynasty	Rājabhaṭa	<i>śrī rājabhaṭa</i>	c. 690-790
	M	19		Prīthubhaṭa	<i>śrī prīthubhaṭa</i>	
11	L	18		Sarvvabhaṭa	<i>śrī sarvvabhaṭa</i>	
	L	18			<i>śrī sarvandada</i>	
	K	17		Valabhaṭa	<i>śrī valabhaṭa</i>	
12	-	20	uncertain		<i>śrī aṅga</i>	
13	N	20	Pala dynasty		<i>śrī vālamṛgāṅka</i>	late 8 th -9 th century (c. 765-)
14	-	21	Buddhist issue		<i>ratnatraya</i>	c. 680

* for king Pradyumnabandhu, see Griffiths 2015

The new coin inscribed *a*

The new gold coin published by Shariful Islam fits into a clear position within the sequence of Samatāṭa issues as set out in Table A. The sequence places it next to the coins inscribed *su* (Series 4C.2). This prompts me to consider its inscription again. The overall shape of the inscription is identical to that of the coins inscribed *su*, so I have to raise the possibility that the inscription is not *a*, as it appears, but a damaged version of *su* (see Fig. 1). The damage looks as though it was caused by damage after issue, as there is a scar on the coin, extending to either side of the missing part of the loop of *su* and also cuts the adjacent vertical line of the king's dress.



A. 'inscribed *a*' (new coin) B. inscribed *su* (Mitchiner 2004, no. 5258) C. inscribed *su* (private collection)

Fig. 1. Comparison of letters

A coin of this series with a similar but smaller break in the inscription was published by Mitchiner (2004: no. 5258), while another coin in a private collection shows the same crossing of the horizontal line over the vertical as on the new coin. I must emphasise that this explanation of the new coin is only a possibility. This cannot be demonstrated unless an example of a coin from the same obverse die, but without the suggested damage, is found.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Shariful Islam for inviting me to comment on this paper. I am also grateful to Susmita Basu-Majumdar for her help in acquiring scarce publications and to Bulbul Ahmed for generously sending me a copy of Chowdhury and Chakravarti's 2018 *History of Bangladesh – Early Bengal in Regional Perspectives* (up to c. 1200 BCE). Over the years many people have shared images of Samatāṭa gold coins with me for this research. Among them I would like to particularly thank S.K. Bose for helping me get images of coins from the Assam National Museum in Gauhati and the Bangladesh National Museum in Dhaka, J.P. Goenka and Vikram Chand for those of the coins in their collections, Bulbul Ahmed for those found in the Mainamati excavations, and most of all my much-missed friend Nicholas Rhodes for his examples.

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A NEW GOLD COIN OF NASIR AL-DIN ISMA'IL SHAH, THE REBEL SULTAN IN THE DECCAN

Shailendra Bhandare

In Indian numismatics, new coins often turn up from seemingly nowhere. Recently I got a taste of one of those 'eureka' moments when a message arrived in my email inbox with a request to have a look at some coins, and ended up revealing a coin the like of which has never been seen before. Earlier, in November 2020, Dr. Johannes Beltz and Dr. Axel Langer, both curators of Indian and Islamic Arts at the Museum Rietberg in Zürich, Switzerland, contacted me. A small collection of about 60 Indian coins had been left to the museum as a bequest and they requested me to have a look at them, mainly to have the coins attributed simply so that it would help them with museum paperwork.

The Reinhart Collection

The assemblage belonged to the late Balthasar 'Balz' Reinhart (16 Oct 1916-15 Aug 2005). He was the second son of Georg Reinhart, and one of four brothers. At the age of 21, Balthasar joined his family firm Volkart Brothers. This firm was started in 1851 by two Swiss traders, Johann Georg and Salomon Volkart, simultaneously in Bombay and in Winterthur, Switzerland. At that time, the firm principally traded in cotton, which was then becoming a major global commodity. Gradually Volkart Brothers expanded into trade in tea, coffee, oil, cocoa, spices, rubber and other such goods that represented the typical 'colonial trade'. In 1912, the marriage of the heiress, Lily Volkart, into the Reinhart family brought Volkart Brothers under the control of the Reinharts. That is how Balthasar Reinhart's father came to inherit the family's interests in the firm.

From 1940 until the end of WWII, Balthasar was stationed in Bombay and oversaw the operations of Volkart Brothers, which now had over 80 branches in India alone. It is plausible that he acquired the coins during this period. The collection typically has coins from western India, mostly consisting of Indian princely states (Kutch, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Junagarh, and Gwalior), but also has a few sample Mughal gold mohurs, such as a mohur of Akbar minted at Ahmadabad, a mohur of Shahjahan of Akbarabad, and a mohur of Aurangzeb of Golkonda.

After the war, Balthasar Reinhart became an associate and member of the board of directors of the Volkart Company. In 1949, he became the president of the newly created Volkart Foundation, established to serve as a hub for the company's cultural engagement and philanthropy. He served in that capacity for fifteen years. In 1985, he retired from active business life and spent the rest of his life in cultural and philanthropic activities.

The gold coin

I was astonished to spot the coin which is the subject of this paper in the Reinhart Collection and, realising its importance, I asked Dr. Langer for permission to publish it. Dr. Langer consented immediately and I am very grateful to him for his co-operation, without which this note would not have seen the light of day. The coin is of gold, weighs 11.05 g, and can be described as follows (Fig. 1):



Fig. 1. Gold tanka of Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah

Obverse: Arabic legend within circle, in four lines -

المفتوح
بعناية الفتاح
أبو الفتح إسماعيل
شاه

al-maftūḥ ba-'ināyat al-fatāḥ abū al-fatḥ ismā'il shāh
[(the one who is) conquered by the Grace of the Conqueror (one of the names of Allah); the Father of Victory, Isma'il Shah]

In the margin, Arabic legend clockwise from 4 o'clock -

ضرب هذه السكة بحضرت فتحاباد سنة سبع و أربعين و (سبعماية)
ḍuriba ḥadḥah al-sikkah ba-ḥadrat fataḥābād sanah sab'a
wa arb'a'in wa (sab'amāya)

[(was) struck, this coin, in Venerable Fathabad, year seven and forty and seven hundred]

Reverse: Arabic legend in four lines -

السلطان
الأعظم ناصر الدنيا
و الدين معين
أمير المؤمنين

al-sulṭān al-a'ẓam nāṣir al-dunyā wa al-dīn mu'īn amīr al-mūminīn

[The Mighty Sultan, Defender of the World and of the (true) Religion, Assistant to the Leader of the Faithful]

These legends indicate that the coin was struck by Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah at Fathabad in the Hijri year 747, which corresponds to 24 April 1346 till 15 March 1347 CE. 'Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah' was the regal name adopted by Isma'il Mukh (or Makh), an Afghan nobleman who rebelled in the Deccan against Muhammad bin Tughlaq, the Sultan of Delhi (1325-1352). The episode of this rebellion has been narrated with various comments in salient Islamic chronicles concerning the Delhi Sultanate and, in particular, the career of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.

Primary sources

The best sources for the history of this rebellion and its aftermath are works by three eminent Muslim historians, Ziauddin Barani, Abdul Malik 'Isami, and Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi, known by his *nom de plume* 'Firishta'. Of the three, Barani (1285-1358) and 'Isami (1311-?) were contemporaries of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and are, therefore, often considered as more authentic, whereas Firishta (1560-1620) was a later scholar.

The *Tārīkh-i Firozshāhi* of Ziauddin Barani: this text was written in the early years of the reign of Firuz Tughlaq, the son and successor of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Ziauddin Barani was a prominent scholar at Muhammad bin Tughlaq's court. He had also rendered political duties to his patron, such as being an emissary; in fact, he had been Tughlaq's emissary in the very episode we are concerned with, and had paid a visit to Daulatabad to the rebels' camp. Its translation was published in Vol. III of the multi-volume series 'History of India as told by its own historians. The Muhammadan Period', by H.M. Elliott and John Dawson (London, Trubner & Co, 1867). The

translation of Barani's work appears in this volume as section XV, from p. 93 onwards. The particular episode dealing with the rebellion on Isma'il Mukh is described on pages 258-263 of this edition.

The *Futuhu's-Salātin* or *Shah Nameh-i Hind* by Abdul Malik 'Isami: 'Isami was a contemporary of 'Alauddin Bahman Shah, alias Hasan/ Ahsan Shah, the founder of the Bahmani Sultanate. Not surprisingly, he is highly critical of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and lavishes praise on Bahman Shah. The *Futuhu's-Salātin* is a poetic history, composed in the *Masnawi* style and using the *Mutaqārib* metre. It was published in translation by Agha Mahdi Hussain in three volumes (New York/ Aligarh Muslim University, 1967, 1976-77). The episode regarding the rebellion in the Deccan and events leading to the foundation of the Bahmani Sultanate features in verses 9831-10500 (p. 770-828, Vol. III of Agha Mahdi Hussain's translation).

The *Tarikh-i Firishta* of Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi: the most well-known translation of Firishta's work, titled 'History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India' and divided into four volumes, was published in 1829 by Gen. John Briggs (1785-1875), a colonial administrator and military serviceman in the Deccan, although earlier translations are also known. Firishta's book III deals with the history of the Deccan Sultanates and it appears in Vol. 2 of Briggs's translation.

Secondary sources

The information from these primary sources and some other chronicles was extensively utilised by historian Haroon Khan Sherwani, who wrote a comprehensive history of the Bahmani dynasty (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan: an Objective Study*, Hyderabad, 1946). The details regarding the episode of Isma'il Shah's rebellion are to be found on pp. 30-37. Sherwani also wrote other works concerning the history of the Deccan under the Bahmani Sultanate, such as a biography of Mahmud Gawan (*Mahmud Gawan: the Great Bahmani Wazir*, Allahabad, 1942) and *History of Medieval Deccan, 1295-1724* (Hyderabad, 1973) in which he provided precious insights into the episode of Isma'il Shah's short-lived reign.

Historical context

The following paragraphs outline how the events unfolded and how they were narrated, with comments, in the sources described above. It is a well-known historical fact that Muhammad bin Tughlaq unleashed a tyrannical rule, guided by fanciful ideas executed in a capricious and heavy-handed manner. Both Barani and 'Isami chastised the Sultan for decisions he took with regard to governance, statecraft and campaigns. His long reign (1325-1352) was, therefore, characterized by frequent insubordinations, with revolts breaking out not only in distant parts of the Sultanate, like Sindh, Madurai (Ma'abar) and Bengal, but also in provinces like Gujarat, Malwa and the middle Gangetic Valley that were relatively close to its core. The Sultan managed to keep a lid on most by using his armies; however, in regions such as Ma'abar and the Deccan, the establishment of Delhi rule had only been accomplished in less than two decades before Muhammad bin Tughlaq ascended the throne and it had never been fully consolidated. These areas were, therefore, more prone to insubordination.

The problems in the Deccan began after Muhammad bin Tughlaq appointed his tutor, Qutlugh Khan, as the governor of the southern provinces, with the title 'Alam ul-Mulk', almost a decade after he had ascended the throne, having murdered his own father. Qutlugh Khan was a wise and respected man, but the Sultan became displeased with him, particularly after one episode: while the Sultan was quelling a rebellion in Gujarat, some of the insurgents fled and sought asylum with Qutlugh Khan, stationed at the provincial capital Daulatabad. The Sultan deputed one of his less popular courtiers named Ahmad Lacheen

to Daulatabad to bring the rebels back to Gujarat. Lacheen arrived at Daulatabad, met with Qutlugh Khan and took charge of the rebels. While they were on their way back to Gujarat, Lacheen blurted out to the rebels his intention to recommend to the Sultan that they should all be condemned to death. As a result, the rebels were alarmed; they regrouped and made a plan to revolt again. They rose in rebellion and managed to kill Lacheen. Then they set out to return to Daulatabad. En route, they managed to gather a number of disaffected men and, by the time they arrived at Daulatabad, the situation turned into a major revolt, with even local 'Rajas of Deccan' joining forces with them. Soon, the armies of the provinces of Berar and Khandesh also joined them and brought with them the contents of the provincial treasuries they had managed to loot.

Upon taking control of Daulatabad, the rebels elected an Afghan named Isma'il Mukh (spelled 'Moogh' by Briggs) who was a brother of Malik Yel Afghan, the commander of Tughlaq's armies in Malwa. He was enthroned with the regal name 'Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah'. Sherwani mentions, albeit as an educated conjecture, that his accession took place sometime in the month of Jumada I of AH 746 (September 1346 CE). The idea behind this choice was the anticipation that his brother also might be persuaded to join the rebellion. The rebels had now gathered sufficient momentum that other prominent Amirs of the Deccan, like Malik Hasan, the powerful *iqta'a* holder of Kuduchi, Hukkeri and Miraj in south Maharashtra, joined the fray.

The hopes of persuading Malik Yel were soon dashed, however. Muhammad bin Tughlaq, who was busy dealing with an insurgency in Gujarat, hurriedly left that province with the intention of quelling this new revolt. On his way, contrary to the expectation of the Deccani rebels, Malik Yel joined forces with the Sultan. Now a formidable Tughlaq army began its march towards Daulatabad. The rebels mustered a force of 30,000 to face the advancing Tughlaq army. The two armies clashed outside the fort of Daulatabad, apparently on the same plain that Alauddin Khilji, almost half a century earlier, had defeated the Hindu Yadava ruler, Ramachandra. There is a perceptible lament in Barani's writing about this, because he saw these insurgencies as infighting between the 'victorious armies of Islam'. It seemed the rebels were emerging victorious, but then the battle suddenly turned: the standards of Nasir al-Din Isma'il fell from the hands of the standard-bearer. The rebels took this as a sign that their chief had fallen and this caused a lot of panic in their midst. By the time this misconception became clear it was nearly nightfall and both armies withdrew from battle. During the night, the rebels conspired and made a plan - Nasir al-Din Isma'il was to retreat into the fort of Daulatabad with a small retinue, and the rest of the army would disperse away from the battlefield, to continue to harass the Tughlaq forces using guerrilla tactics. The command of the rebel army that was to disperse was entrusted to Malik Hasan, who was now given a new title, Zafar Khan. The plan was quickly brought into action.

The next day, Muhammad bin Tughlaq found the battlefield deserted. Realising that Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah had retreated into the fort, he, too, devised a plan: he divided his army into two parts. One part laid siege to the fort; the other part went in pursuit of Zafar Khan and the rebels, who had dispersed away from Daulatabad. The siege was largely successful and brought the occupants of the fort to their knees. However, just as Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah contemplated surrendering, news arrived that there had been a much more serious insurrection in Delhi. This caused a lot of alarm in Muhammad bin Tughlaq's camp. He hurriedly lifted the siege and left for Delhi with select troops. This provided a much-needed breath of relief to Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah and his position as an independent Sultan was secured for the time being. The rebels came out of the fort and persuaded whatever was left of the Tughlaq army to join forces with them.

In the meantime, the Tughlaq army that was sent in pursuit of the rebels managed to take hold of a few key strategic forts. But Zafar Khan, gradually mustering enough local assistance, managed to inflict a series of defeats on them. Instrumental in helping him was a certain 'Raja of Telingana' (probably a Reddy chief). The fortress of Gulbarga was held by a Hindu partisan of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. With renewed assistance from detachments sent by the now-affirmed Sultan Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah, Zafar Khan managed to eject this Hindu garrison-commander from Gulbarga. The rest of the imperial army, left without strategy and supplies after Muhammad bin Tughlaq's hasty departure towards Delhi, was also soundly defeated at Bidar, Kandhar and Sagar. Having proven his military leadership, Zafar Khan arrived at Daulatabad to meet Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah with the news of these victories. At this time, Isma'il took a rather unusual step: he called a meeting of all the leaders of the rebellion and declared his wish to abdicate in favour of Zafar Khan (although according to 'Isami, he had been unwilling to be elected sultan from the very beginning of the uprising, because he thought he was too old). The assembly consented to this proposal, and accordingly, on 24 Rab'i al-Akhir AH 748 (12 August 1347 CE), Zafar Khan was crowned at Daulatabad under a black canopy with the regal name 'Ala al-Din Bahman Shah', or 'Ahsan Shah'. The new king chose to move his capital to Gulbarga, which was renamed 'Ahsanabad' in his honour. Almost four years later, Muhammad bin Tughlaq died, thus removing all threats to the newly founded Deccani Sultanate.

The new sultan created an order of nobility for his court and appointed Isma'il to its highest office, as the *Amir ul-Umra* or 'The Emir of emirs'. However, soon after the accession, Bahman Shah's son Muhammad was married to the daughter of a prominent courtier named Malik Saif al-Din Ghorī. On this occasion, Bahman Shah elevated Saif al-Din to a new rank of nobility above all other existing ranks. Isma'il resented this and plotted to dethrone the sultan. However, Bahman Shah caught wind of his machinations and confronted Isma'il in an open assembly. Although Isma'il denied the charge, others testified to his treasonous intentions. As a result, Isma'il was put to death, but his family was spared and so was his personal wealth. Moreover, his son Bahadur was appointed to the same rank as his slain father. Thus ended the short-lived career of the first independent sultan of the Deccan.

Coinage in the name of Isma'il Shah

At this juncture, it will be appropriate to take stock of the published coins in the name of Isma'il Shah. While it is mentioned in the sources listed above that Isma'il Shah's declaration of independence was accompanied by the exercise of the rights of *khutba* and *sikka*, coins struck in his name were virtually unknown till the mid-20th century. In an article titled 'Isma'il Shah – a Precursor to the Bahmanid Sultans of the Deccan', published in *ONSNL* no. 71 (1981, p. 4), Stan Goron mentioned that the credit of bringing his coins forth the first time goes to E.E. Speight. He had published a copper/ billon *jital* bearing the legend *Abu al-Fath Isma'il Shah* on the obverse and *Nasir al-Dunya wa al-Din* on the reverse in an article in the journal 'Islamic Culture' in April 1935. A second instance of the same type was published in a note by M. Amjad Ali in *JNSI*, Vol. XXVIII (1966). To this, Goron in his own article added another type, also a *jital*, with a longer reverse legend, giving the *laqab* and *qunyat* of the Sultan along with titles *al-Sultan al-'Azam*. Coins of this second type have the name *Isma'il Shah* in a double circle on obverse. A few other examples of this type, noted subsequently in numismatic auctions (see Fig. 2), suggest that there is a marginal inscription on the obverse and in all likelihood it comprises the AH date in words and the mint-name *Fathabad*.



Fig. 2. *Jital* of Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah, 3.20 g (G&G BH3) (Marudhar Arts, Auction 26, Lot 110)

Both *jital* types have been listed in Goron and Goenka's seminal work *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates* (2001) as types BH3 and BH4. Along with these *jitals*, Goron and Goenka have also listed a billon *tanka* of 80-ratti weight standard as BH2. This type has the legend *al-Imam al-'Azam Nasir al-Dunya wa al-Din* on the obverse and *Abu al-Fath Isma'il Shah al-Sultan* on the reverse.

The mint-name Fathabad

The new coin published in this article bears the mint-name Fathabad and thereby re-opens almost a century-old discussion about the identification and location of this mint. H.K. Sherwani was the first historian to discuss the identification of Fathabad as part of a larger discussion about mint towns of the Bahmani Sultanate, having noticed it on some silver coins of Bahman Shah's successor, Muhammad I. After considering a number of possible contenders (like Dharur in Marathwada and the fort of Laling in Khandesh), he came to the conclusion that it was indeed Daulatabad that was renamed *Fathabad* during the reign of Bahman Shah to celebrate the victory of Bahmani forces over the fortress of Kalyani. Sherwani quoted a passage to this effect from a later chronicle, the *Burhān-i Māthir* by the court chronicler of the Nizamshahi Sultanate of Ahmadnagar, Sayyid Ali bin Aziz ullah at-Tabatabai. On pp. 52-53 of his treatise 'The Bahmanis of the Deccan', Sherwani suggests, on the authority of Tabatabai, that:

"Qir Khan was sent to subjugate the strong fort of Kalyani which would not submit without a siege. The siege lasted for five months at the end of which the Tughluq garrison begged for piece and safety and laid down their arms. They were fully pardoned by the Bahmani commander who ordered that Kalyani should be turned into a *Dar ul-Amān* or a city of refuge and guaranteed everyone's life and property. When the king heard of this great victory he ordered rejoicings in the capital for a whole week and renamed it Fathabad".

This is an almost verbatim translation of the Farsi passage no. 17 from the *Burhān-i Māthir*. Sherwani also discussed this attribution in some detail in a footnote on p. 58 of his book on Mahmud Gawan (*vide supra*). Sherwani was only aware of coins struck in the name of Muhammad I from this mint. However, in the decades following his commentary, a number of others have come to light. Goron and Goenka listed silver and gold *tankas* in the name of Bahman Shah struck at this mint (G&G BH10 and BH11 respectively). None are known with a clearly readable date, but, since subsequent issues are known from Ahsanabad mint (reflecting Bahman Shah's move of his capital to that city), it is fair to surmise that the issues of Fathabad were struck earlier in his reign. Also, although Sherwani knew of only eight coins of Fathabad mint struck in the name of Muhammad I, that number has gone up considerably now and we know that the run of these issues lasted for the first seven or so years of Muhammad I's reign (AH 761-767, G&G BH 28). So, at best, the mint appears to have operated sporadically: first, early in the reign of Bahman Shah, and then for a few years during the reign of Muhammad I. No other Bahmani ruler was known to have struck coins at Fathabad mint, until now – when we have a gold coin of Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah with that mint-name.

This fact puts the account behind Sherwani's identification of Fathabad as Daulatabad in jeopardy, because it does not readily fit the chronological course of events that he bases his inference on, as narrated in the *Burhān-i Māthir*. According to the text, the event of the capture of Kalyani, which prompted Bahman Shah to rename Daulatabad as Fathabad, happened only after the abdication of Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah in the latter's favour. The battle and victory at Kalyani, the celebration of which resulted in the change of the name, took place at least five months, if not a bit more, into the reign of Bahman Shah. That puts the date of victory over Kalyani in the final months of AH 748, or even early in AH 749. However, the fact that Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah already uses this name on his coin dated AH747 suggests that Daulatabad was already known as Fathabad almost two years before the capture of Kalyani.

It is, therefore, plausible that the name of Daulatabad was changed to Fathabad not by Bahman Shah, but by Nasir al-Din Isma'il Shah. He appears to have been particularly attached to the use of the word *fath*, i.e. victory. His *qunyat* was *Abū al-Faṭḥ* and, on the gold *tanka*, he calls himself *Al-Maḥṭūh ba-'ināyat al-Faṭāḥ* (the one who is conquered by the grace of Allah, or 'the Conqueror'). The alliterative use of the word *fath* is very apparent in this title. The renaming of his capital as Fathabad would thus accord with his assumed royal name and title. It is interesting to note that, according to Sherwani ('Bahmani', p. 45, fn. 57), some chroniclers like Firishta and Badayuni actually mention that Isma'il's second name was not Mukh/ Makh, but Faṭḥ. However, Sherwani dismisses this, because, according to him, these chroniclers are later and they might have come across a reference, which probably had a scribal error, inadvertently converting Makh into Faṭḥ. However, judging by the evidence offered by the gold coin, it seems increasingly likely that Faṭḥ was indeed Isma'il's pre-royal name.

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