

Supplement to ONS Journal 205

A SEMINAR ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY OF INDIA

The Numismatic Society of India was founded in 1910 and has been an important part of South Asian Numismatics ever since. The journal of the NSI has published many seminal articles in the past century by authors not just from India but around the globe. So with the anniversary of the foundation of the society looming there was much talk of arranging some sort of event to celebrate this in London.



Nick Rhodes opens proceedings at the event.

In 2009 Joe Cribb (then Keeper of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum), Nicholas Rhodes (Secretary General of the Oriental Numismatic Society) and Paras Nath Singh (of the Numismatic Society of India) agreed that such an event should be organised. The British Museum would host the event, and the Oriental Numismatic Society would organize speakers, with the papers published by the ONS and the NSI. With the extremely generous support of A H Baldwin & Sons, as well as the Classical Numismatic Group and the Simmon's Gallery it was possible to arrange for a two-day seminar on 14 and 15 May 2010.



Michael Mitchiner (right) receiving an NSI medal for his contribution to numismatics from PN Singh.

Fifteen papers were scheduled and a large audience of ONS members and visitors were present for the opening session in which each of the representatives spoke. The seminar was then divided into themes, on the first day Ancient and Post-Medieval sessions were chaired by Robert Bracey and on the second day three sessions on the Historic period from the Indo-Greeks to the Guptas were chaired by Joe Cribb.

In addition to the papers, the NSI took the opportunity to formally award medals conferred on prominent numismatists at its anniversary event in Varanasi. Recipients included Joe Cribb, Michael Mitchiner, Ellen Raven, Nicholas Rhodes and your Editor.

Everyone who contributed a presentation and those who had planned to present but were unable, were then given the opportunity to prepare papers. This supplement is the first result, containing a selection of the papers. The enjoyable element of editing the supplement has been reading papers from enthusiastic and expert authors. Less enjoyable has been deciding which papers will be included and which will not. The seminar was a huge success and many valuable contributions were received. If all were published in the journal it would run to several supplements. So instead, only a selection is presented here.



Prashant shares a few words of wisdom with fellow attendees after his talk.

In keeping with the journal's normal format, the papers are presented in chronological order of subject. The first paper, by Sharad Sharma, presents a recent hoard of punch-mark coins found on the border between Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The second paper, by Prashant Kulkarni, advances us a little forward in time, looking at coins from Vidarbha. Those coins that fall between the grand Imperial powers have not received the attention they deserve. Prashant presents an abundant range of data on these coins.

The third paper, by Pankaj Tandon, also seeks to rescue a series of coins from obscurity. Pankaj has published a number of articles on the Paratarajas already, but here he brings all the evidence to bear to produce a coherent account of the dynasty. Pankaj illustrates just how much numismatists can achieve with a dynasty, situated on the western border of the Kushan dynasty in the second and third centuries AD, which might otherwise be completely lost to history.

The fourth paper, by Ellen Raven, brings us to a more familiar series: the coins of the first Gupta emperor, Samudra. She takes up the vexed problem of classification, 'lumpers' and 'splitters'. Ellen's approach, looking for idiomatic similarities across different coin types suggests that understanding Gupta coinage requires a fresh perspective.

The fifth paper, by Pratipal Bhatia, brings us from historic India to the medieval world and a previously overlooked Adivaraha coin type.

The last paper in this supplement, by virtue of covering the most recent material, is by Paul Stevens. His talk was a high point of the seminar, introducing the attendees to the sometimes strange, sometimes confusing world inhabited by those who minted coins for the East India Company. Paul's work is an excellent example of how fruitful hours in the archives can enlighten the numismatist.

Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the physical size of the supplement prevents us from publishing many other worthy papers. All the papers which have been edited will be taken on by the NSI, who will produce a complete volume.

RB

A NEW LOCAL TYPE OF SILVER PUNCH-MARKED COINS FROM GONDIA

By Sharad Sharma

Indian punchmarked coinage in silver still remains among the most enigmatic of ancient coinages and a complete understanding remains one of the few residual puzzles carried forward from the nineteenth century. The coinage may broadly be divided into two categories: the first, local, type of silver punchmarked coinage is believed to have been issued by various mahajanapadas and janapadas during the fifth and fourth centuries BC and was in circulation until roughly the advent of the Mauryan empire, which issued the second category of punchmarked coinage, known as imperial coinage. Whereas the local punchmarked coinage was restricted to small areas, specifically to their issuing mahajanapadas or janapadas, the imperial coinage (Mauryan) is found across the length and breadth of the entire Indian sub-continent (i.e. India and its neighbouring countries).

I was recently informed of a mixed hoard of local type silver punchmarked coins from a place called Gondia (Dist.: Gondia, Maharashtra., India). Gondia is a town on Maharashtra's northern border with Madhya Pradesh. The said hoard reportedly contained more than 60 coins, of which I was able to record 14 coins (one of each variety) of Type 'A' and 'B'. A brief summary of the hoard is presented in table 1.

Type	Type description	Metal	Weight standard	No. of varieties ##	No. of coins
A	A new local type of 4-symbol punchmarked coins	Silver	Karshapana	11	40-45 **
B	'Scorpion' Type 4-symbol punchmarked coins	Silver	Karshapana	3	4-5 **
C	Single symbol type punchmarked coins ('Avanti' type ¹)	Base Silver	quarter Karshapana	Not Examined	15-20 **
D	Single symbol (Elephant) – Repoussé Technique	Silver	Mashaka	Not Examined	1

No. of varieties, as recorded among Type 'A' and 'B' coins

** figure indicates an approximate number

Table 1: Summary of Hoard

Some of the important features of coins in the hoard may be summarised as follows:

- All the coins of Type 'A' and 'B' are silver punchmarked local types.
- A total of 14 varieties were recorded among Type 'A' and 'B' coins in the hoard (*pl. refer to chart*).
- The coins of Type 'A' and 'D' were previously unknown and appear for the first time in this hoard; whereas the Type 'B' and 'C' coins are previously known but the varieties of Type 'B' (in this hoard) are all previously un-recorded ones.
- Considering the condition, the coins of Type 'A' seem to be later issues as these are all in a very good state of preservation, as compared to the coins of Type 'B', which are quite worn.
- Considering the weight standard (*karshapana*) and the number of punches used (four) on both types A and B, it may be surmised that they were issued close together in time.
- Whereas the coins of Type 'A' depict only ABCC pattern (three symbols i.e. A, B & C used, of which, one (C) is struck twice, thus making four punches in all), the coins of Type 'B' depict two symbol patterns – ABCC and also ABCD (all four symbols being different and struck only once). This is

enigmatic as the ABCD pattern is generally believed to be a later development while repetition is considered an earlier practice, but on the basis of condition, the coins of Type 'B' seem to be the earlier issues.

- The Karshapana weight standard is believed to have been used for the first time by the Magadha mahajanapada and later by the Kosala mahajanapada. Kosala, unlike Magadha (which began with fewer punches but later, on almost² all its karshapana standard coinage, used five punches in an ABCDE pattern, i.e. all five punches are different), used the four-punch design on its coinage throughout. Hence, the weight standard and four-punch scheme seemed to be inspired by Kosala rather than Magadha.
- The use of the 'scorpion' symbol on Type 'B' coins was already known from previous finds and is seen on the present coins as well.
- The use of the 'royal insignia' symbol on Type 'A' coins of the hoard is noteworthy. This symbol was also used on coins in the *Prasad*³ hoard, which are, however, based on a half-karshapana weight standard. Apart from the above, this symbol has also been recorded on a few other important finds of four-symbol, karshapana-weight standard, local punchmarked coins from Madhya Pradesh (detailed elsewhere in this paper).
- The use of animate objects viz. turtle, bull, bird, fish etc. suggests a fairly advanced state of punch design and engraving.
- Some symbols, e.g. the six-armed symbol, seem to be influenced by the coinage of the Magadha mahajanapada.

Although various types of silver punchmarked coins have been reported from Madhya Pradesh from time to time, we shall restrict ourselves to four-punch type silver punchmarked coins, based on the karshapana weight standard (4pkw) from Madhya Pradesh. The types of 4pkw silver punchmarked coins, as mentioned above, may be listed as under:

1. Scorpion-type coins

These are reported from various finds, provenanced as well as un-provenanced. This type always has a scorpion symbol as one of the four punches. There are numerous sub-variations of scorpion symbol recorded, mostly in the form of smaller ancillary objects above the scorpion. The other common symbols on this type are birds, Srivatsa etc. This type was earlier attributed to Vatsa mahajanapada, but the said attribution was later disputed⁴ on the grounds that this type was never reported within the area of the Vatsa mahajanapada. Even from Kaushambi, which, besides being the capital of Vatsa mahajanapada, was also among the six most prominent cities of the period and which is among the most prolific sites in terms of coin finds (though mostly local copper and universal types) this type of silver punchmarked coinage has never been reported. On the contrary, all the provenanced finds of this type are from the southern side of the Ganga/Yamuna rivers (Rewa/Sidhi regions).



Fig.1: A typical scorpion-type coin

Among the presently discussed 4pkw types from Madhya Pradesh, the scorpion type is probably the most comprehensive. This type has been known for quite some time and, in terms of fabric and symbols, it represents a respectable number of varieties and sub-varieties. On that basis, a long period of circulation (as compared to other type mentioned below) may be suggested. This type has frequently been found with other 4pkw types, and in the Gondia hoard this type is found in worn condition, suggesting that the coins are older than the Type 'A' coins in the hoard. In other cases this type has also been

reported with G/H Series-I coins of Magadha⁵. An ABCC pattern is most common for this type, though a rare ABCD pattern is also known.

2. Elephant / bull-type coins

This type always has an elephant (facing left or right) or a bull (again facing left or right) symbol. This type was previously known from a single find⁶, but in recent years, many finds (provenanced as well as un-provenanced) have been reported (see table below) from the areas around the Son river valley of Madhya Pradesh. This type, in most of the cases has an ABCC pattern (i.e. four-punch coin, having three symbols, one of which is punched twice). The third and fourth symbols are a pair of the same punch and are generally geometric marks - mostly ornate circles, wheels, whorls etc. but animate objects viz. fish, turtle, bull etc. are also recorded (viz. on the coins of the present hoard). On the basis of the second symbol, however, this type may further be divided into the following sub-types:



Fig. 2: A royal insignia type

'Royal insignia' sub-type coins

The second symbol on these coins looks like a typical candelabrum symbol and has been described as a 'five-pronged fork with two taurines' by Mitchiner⁷. It may also be a symbolic representation of two bulls (depicted as taurines) yoked to a long pole that ends in a plough with five blades, but a more plausible explanation of this symbol is that it is some sort of 'royal insignia'. A few variations of this symbol are known (dots around the 'royal insignia' symbol, for example). These coins are exclusively recorded with ABCC pattern.



Fig. 3: A crescent sub-type from the Bargama hoard

'Dot / taurine in single / double crescent' sub-type coins

This type is very close to the previous 'royal insignia' type in almost all respect except that a crescent (with a few variations viz. single crescent/double crescent/dot inside/taurine inside etc.) is found in place of the royal insignia symbol (in the second symbol position). Interestingly though, in the Goenka hoard⁸ coins, both the symbols i.e. royal insignia and crescent (double crescent with taurine inside) were recorded together, strongly suggesting that the above two sub-types are closely related and most probably issued by the same authority.

The known hoards of 4pkw coinage are:

Rewa Hoard ¹³	A mixed hoard, containing mostly 'scorpion'-type coins and a few coins (4g+ type) of Kosala mahajanapada.
Gondia Hoard	The present hoard. A mixed hoard containing 'scorpion'-type and 'elephant/bull'-type coins (+ 2 other types, mentioned elsewhere in the paper).
Prasad Hoard	Half-Karshapana weight std. coins with elephant/bull and 'royal insignia' symbols.
Nagda Hoard	Dist. Dewas (M.P.). Elephant/bull-type coins (around 50 coins).

Some of the above-listed hoards/finds are mixed ones. Mixed hoards of local silver punch-marked coins are very rare and extremely important as they are one of the few tools for fixing a reliable internal chronology of the coin types. Many a time, with the use of additional information available, external chronological links can also be ascertained from such hoards, thus giving these hoards a vital historical significance. The 4pkw coinage presently under discussion has been found in many mixed hoards (as mentioned above).

Attribution of local type silver punchmarked coinage to their issuing mahajanapadas/janapadas has been quite controversial (at least in some cases). Some scholars believe that these local types were associated with particular river valleys (which were conducive to trade due to easy river transport and had rich agricultural conditions due to easily available irrigation, thus generating enough surplus for wealth creation, trade activities and hence a need of money for transactional purposes) and not to mahajanapadas or janapadas. However some series of local type punchmarked coinage have been so reliably found and in sufficient numbers from certain areas that attribution of those series to certain janapadas (viz. Magadha, Koshala) has been widely accepted with little doubt. By the same logic, therefore, other series should also have been issued by some authority and that authority should have been political (whether monarchical or republican (as for Vajjis) is immaterial) and not some loosely-tied association of merchant guilds of some riverine region. Anyway, in the present state of knowledge, this issue is far from resolved and hence better left for future research and/or discoveries.

As has been stated above, on the basis of provenances, scorpion-type punchmarked coinage can hardly be linked with Vatsa mahajanapada. Although, the Vatsa mahajanapada was among the important sixteen Mahajanapadas of Buddhist times and is mentioned in the Buddhist chronicle, the *Anguttara Nikaya*, a point not to be missed is that Udayan, who is its only well-known ruler, during the times of the Buddha, was keener on worldly pleasures (his fondness for games and eloping with Vasavdatta, the daughter of Pradyot, the legendary king of Avanti are well known and recorded in numerous jatakas and chronicles of those times) rather than towards his duties as a ruler. Udayan's son and successor, Bodhikumara, is also believed to have been equally uninterested in the duties of a king and is reportedly said to have retired to Sumsumaragiri for a sedentary life. Thus, important though the Vatsa mahajanapada might have been, its period of independence (during the period when local type punchmarked coins were being issued by neighbouring janapadas/mahajanapadas) might have been short enough not to warrant an issue of silver punchmarked coins.

A possible issuer of the presently discussed 4pkw coinage might, therefore, be the Chedi mahajanapada. Chedi was among the most ancient mahajanapadas of Buddha's times and is mentioned in the Buddhist chronicle, *Anguttara Nikaya*. Its lineage dates back to the times of the *Mahabharata*. During the times of Buddha, Chedi was among the prominent janapadas, consisting of large parts of northern and central Madhya Pradesh. Its northern neighbour was Vatsa with the river Yamuna acting as borderline between the two. Avanti was to its west and Magadha to the east and south-east. According to '*Chetiya Jataka*', its capital was 'Sotthivati' (Shuktimati). The location of Shuktimati is not conclusively established yet. However, Pargiter places this city around Banda (interestingly, a very important

Mamdar Hoard	55 coins. Mamdar is in Sidhi district. 'Scorpion'-type coins.
Allahabad Find	Provenance not known. 120 coins. 'Scorpion'-type coins.
Koraon Hoard ⁹	Broad fabric 'scorpion'-type coins with G/H-I series of Magadha.
Banda Hoard ¹⁰	Broad fabric 'scorpion'-type coins.
Bargama Hoard ¹¹	A mixed hoard containing bull/elephant-type coins with G/H-I series coins of Magadha.
Goenka Find ¹²	Provenance not known. Mixed hoard with 'scorpion' type and 'royal insignia'/'crescent' type coins.

hoard of scorpion-type 4pkw coins, with distinctly large fabric and un-recorded varieties was found at Banda¹⁴). Tripuri, which was also called Chedinagari, has been identified with modern Tewar, about 10 km from Jabalpur and thus only about 40 km from Gondia, the find-place of the hoard under discussion. On the basis of provenances, therefore, the probability of Chedi as the issuer of the presently discussed 4pkw coinage is quite strong.

On the basis of this discussion, the 4pkw coinage of Madhya Pradesh may tentatively be attributed to Chedi mahajanapada. The previously mentioned types of 4pkw coinage were, in all probability, not widely separated in time and space and were roughly contemporary to Magadha's G/H Series-I karshapana weight standard punchmarked coins (which have as yet been found only in Bihar, eastern and central Uttar Pradesh and northern Madhya Pradesh). The aforesaid areas were under Magadhan occupation before the reign of the Nandas. On the basis of hoard evidence as well, G/H Series – I might have ended shortly before the reign of the Nandas. It may, therefore, safely be concluded that the coins under discussion circulated around 400 BC.

Images of the hoard types



Type A: Varieties 1 to 3



Type A: Varieties 4 to 6



Type A: Varieties 7 to 9



Type A: Varieties 10 and 11



Type B: Varieties 1 to 3

Notes and References

1. Rajgor, Dilip, *Punch-marked Coins of Early Historic India*, California (2001), Series 24, pp. 80
2. Except for very early karshapana weight standard coins of four symbol (of Magadha), as for example, in Golakhpur Hoard (in Patna Museum).
3. This group of 97+ coins (comprising a number of mixed types, which were probably not from a single hoard and whose provenance is not known) was purchased by the Patna Museum (Accession Nos. 12271 to 12367) from Shri Durga Prasad in 1936.
4. Sharma, Sharad & Verma, B.P., 'A mixed hoard of local punch-marked coins from Koraon (District Allahabad, U.P.)', *Indian Coin Society (Nagpur) Newsletter* No. 34 (Oct. 2004), pp. 2-3
5. See note 4 above
6. Nagda Hoard, Dist. Dewas (M.P.) 1974-75; 50 coins. These coins elephant/bull type 4pkw coins have been attributed to Avanti janapada by some scholars (See note 1 above, Rajgor Dilip, Series 22, pp. 77).
7. Mitchiner, Michael, *Ancient Trade and Early Coinage*, Volume – I, London (2004), pp. 922-924
8. See note 7 above
9. See note 4 above
10. To be published shortly by the present author
11. Sharma, Sharad & Verma, B.P., 'A mixed hoard of local punch-marked coins from Bargama', *IIRNS Nasik, Numismatic Digest*, Volume 25-26 (2001-2002), pp. 1-24
12. See note 7 above
13. This hoard will shortly be published by the present author.

RECENT DISCOVERIES IN EARLY INSCRIBED COINS OF VIDARBHA

By Prashant P Kulkarni

History and Introduction

Modern Vidarbha consists of the eastern parts of the Mahārāṣṭra State covering the districts of Nāgpur, Chandrapur, Bhandārā, Wardhā, Gondīā Gaḍchiroli, Amrāvati, Yavatmāl, Bulḍāṇa, Akolā and Wāśim. The early history of Vidarbha goes back to the Vedic period and is supported by the abundance of Megalithic sites and other archaeological evidence.

The existence of the Vidarbha janapada is known through the Jātakas and the ancient literature. The first inscriptional evidence of Vidarbha is found in the Nāśik cave inscription of the 19th year of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Pulumāvi.¹ His reign falls in the early second century AD, but we have dependable literary evidence pointing to the existence of Vidarbha in the sixth to fourth centuries before the Christian era. The *Vaidarbha Jātaka* describes the journey of Bodhisattva with a *Vaidarbhi brāhmaṇa* to Chedi *rāṣṭra*.² And according to *Kumbhakarna jātaka*, Karaṇḍu the king of Kaliṅga was a contemporary of Nimi, Nagnajit, and Bhīma, the rulers of Videha, Gāndhara and Vidarbha respectively.³ This means that there was a king named Bhīma who ruled the country of Vidarbha during the 5th-6th centuries BC. One of the jātakas says that the king named Daṇḍaka (of Daṇḍakāraṇya) had subordinate kings named Bhīmraṭh, Kaliṅga and Aṭṭhaka. These can be identified with the Bhīma of Vidarbha, and the rulers of Kaliṅga and Aśmaka.⁴ Even the Purāṇas say *Vidarbha Daṇḍakaiḥ saha*, meaning Vidarbha and Daṇḍaka were together. They also mention that the people of this place were the dwellers of the Deccan along with the Pulindas, Daṇḍakās, Vindhya and others.

The *Daśakumāracharitam*, mentions that, "In the Vidarbha country lived one Puṇyavarmā, the jewel of the Bhoja royal family, who was a partial incarnation of virtue. He was powerful, truthful, self-disciplined, glorious, lofty and vigorous in mind and body".⁵ The *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* mentions that Vidarbha had a kind of dog called Māchāl which could kill a tiger.⁶ Even today such a breed of dogs supposedly exists in the Yavatmal area. We have references to Vidarbha in the *Ṛig-Veda*, *Mahābhārata*, *Jātakas*, *Purāṇas*, *Brihatkathakośa*, *Yoginītantra*, *Pātānjali's Mahābhāṣya*, *Harivaṃśa* and *Mālavikāgnimitra*. All need not be cited here but it is enough to know that the antiquity of Vidarbha goes back to the Vedic period.

Vidarbha was always divided into two portions by the river named Wardhā. The river Wardhā or ancient Varadā flows from north to south. It divides Vidarbha into eastern and western portions. During the early period, the western region was called Bhojakaṭa and the eastern, Bheṇṇakaṭa. We have an interesting reference in the Mālavikāgnimitra about this division. Although it was written by Kālidāsa in the 5th century, it pertains to at least the first-second centuries BC. The plot of the drama as given by Kālidāsa refers to Yajñasena, a king of Vidarbha and a conflict he has with Agnimitra who was ruling at Vidishā as the Śuṅga crown prince. Yajñasena had imprisoned his cousin Mādhavasena and refused to set him free unless Agnimitra released his own brother-in-law, who was a minister under the Mauryas and was imprisoned by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga. Malavikā, the sister of Yajñasena became close to Agnimitra who in turn invaded Vidarbha, defeated the opponent [Yajñasena] and released Mādhavasena. Agnimitra ordered the division of Vidarbha into two portions to be ruled by Yajñasena and Mādhavasena separately.⁷ In the third-second centuries BC, we find that the eastern portion was called by the name of Asika Janapada and the western region was known as Supratiṣṭha Āhāra. During Vākāṭaka times, the two regions were ruled by the eastern Nandivardhana branch and the western Vatsagulma branch. Later, during British times, the division persisted and the two parts were known as the Central Provinces and Berar respectively.

Coinage

The major publications on pre-Sātavāhana coins in Vidarbha have been done by Ajay Mitra Shastri, Chandrashekhara Gupta, Prashant Kulkarni and others. Coins of Dāmabhadra have been well known in the past from various finds in Vidarbha, such as Pavani, Pavanār, Adam, Umred and Bhandārā. Such a coin was first published by Mahāmahopadhyāya V.V. Mirashi who read the legend as *Dimabhāga*⁸ but later corrected it to *Dāmabhadra*⁹. Ajay Mitra Shastri and C.S. Gupta published a note on the same coin contending that they deciphered the legend¹⁰. Later both authors wrote an extensive paper on the Bhadra Mitra rulers in the first volume of *Nidhi*, the Journal of the Indian Coin Society¹¹. A few more coins from excavations at Adam¹² and Pauni (Pavani)¹³ were unearthed by Amarendra Nath. Our knowledge about Dāmabhadra was enhanced by Amiteshwar Jha when he published some more coins, from the British Museum¹⁴. Shastri and Gupta published four varieties of Dāmabhadra's coins based on the placement of symbols and legend, whereas Jha added a couple more sub-varieties and types based on the denominations. Satyabhadra's coins were also published by the above-named authors but a unique Gajalakshmi coin type was brought to light by Narayan Deshmukh¹⁵. Later on, Prashant Kulkarni published a distinct type showing the Yūpa, the sacrificial post, on coins of a Bhadra ruler¹⁶.

Coins of Shreyas

The intention of this paper is to publish more inscribed coins from the Vidarbha region from the earliest period. One such coin found in reasonably good numbers bears the legend *Seyaso*. It is struck with a punch marked technique. Nearly a dozen coins have been examined by the author. A few are illustrated here.

1. Copper, 3.69g, 12x12 mm, coin 1a, copper, 3.70g, 15x11 mm



Obv: two rectangular punches punched one above the other. The upper punch consists of a moon-shaped, hollow, geometric representation flanked by two taurines. The lower punch shows the legend in Brāhmī characters: *seyaso*.

The second coin shows the upper punch struck upside down.

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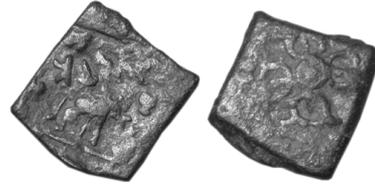
Coins of Āryadatta

One such coin found in the Pavani excavation was published by Amarendra Nath¹⁷. As the illustration was not clear, scholars failed to take notice of this find. The author has encountered four such coins found from the river Vainganga at the village of Pavani. One of them is illustrated here.

This coin is also struck with a punch-mark technique.

This is a totally new find from the same place as the above coins. It bears the clear legend *Ayadatasa*. From the style of the coin it looks contemporary to late varieties of Dāmabhadra.

2. Copper, 3.46 g, 15x17 mm

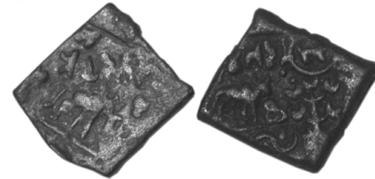


Obv: Bull standing on platform to right, legend above, *Ayadatasa*. Taurine and triskeles in the field.

Rev: A decorative symbol made of four taurins sharing a common circular base with a pellet.

The coins of Dāmabhadra are illustrated below for comparison purposes.

3. Copper 3.01 g, 13x14 mm



Coins of Aśvabandhu

This is another new name brought to light with the discovery of these coins:

4. Copper, 3.17 g, 14x14 mm



Obv: Struck with five punches, one in the centre and four around. The central punch consists of the Brāhmī characters *Asvabandhu*. This can be read as *Aśvabudha* or *Aśvabandhu*. I prefer the latter interpretation as it makes more sense.

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Thus the earliest coins seem to be those struck with punch mark technique bearing two punches, one with the Brāhmī legend: *Seyaso*. This may be attributed to King Shreyas. The ruler who follows could be Dāmabhadra, Āryadatta, Aśvabandhu or Bhūmimitra, as all four exist in punch-marked as well as die-struck technique. The following ruler could be Satyabhadra with a good variety of coinage including one of gajalakshmi type. The rulers following Satyabhadra could be Subeṇa, Dharmabhadra Sarvabhadra and Kanhamitra. Thus the total list of rulers found in eastern Vidarbha may be:

1. Shreyas
2. Āryadatta
3. Bhūmimitra
4. Aśvabandhu
5. Dāmabhadra
6. Satyabhadra

7. Subeṇa
8. Sarvabhadra
9. Dharmabhadra
10. Kanhamitra.
11. Suryamitra
Followed by:
12. Raṃṇo Siri Chimuka
13. Raṃṇo Siri Sātakarṇi
14. Raṃṇo Siri Sāti
15. Raṃṇo Siri Kochhiputa Sātakarṇi

The Eastern Rulers

Apart from these rulers in eastern Vidarbha, there was a completely different set of kings ruling in eastern Vidarbha in the Pusad-Nanded area. Coins of these rulers have been well published by Kulkarni, Somkuwar and Thakur. (See foot notes 19,20,21)

It was in the year 2005 that a great hoard of copper coins was found by the Sonjhari tribe of Marāṭhawādā at a river flowing through the village of Pusad. Gold-dust washers found the coins one by one in the river beds and sold them to the coppersmiths and coin collectors. As a result, the hoard was broken into many groups. Preliminary reports on the hoard were presented by Chandrashekhar Gupta¹⁸, Ashok Singh Thakur¹⁹ and Rajesh Somkuwar²⁰ and a new interpretation was offered by the author²¹. Pusad (19°55'N; 77°38' E) is a tahsil in Yavatamal District. The town is named after the River Pus, which flows through the temples and houses of the village. It is said that the hoard was found at the foot of the Hāṭakeshwar Shiva temple on the banks of the river. The hoard was excavated by the Sonzari tribe engaged in finding metallic objects from the river. One may not call this find strictly a hoard as the coins were river finds taken out over a period of three months. For the sake of convenience, however, they are referred to as the Pusad hoard. The following rulers from the eastern kingdom have been known up till now with the help of this find:

1. Raṃṇo Sebaka
2. Raṃṇo Viga
3. Pātālatāritasa
4. Raṃṇo Kuṭapāda
5. Raṃṇo Kukuṭakhāda
6. Mahāgrāmika
7. Mahāgrāmika Zataṃyā

Followed by:

8. Raṃṇo Siri Sātakarṇi
9. Raṃṇo Siri Sādakarṇi
10. Raṃṇo Siri Sādavāhana
11. Raṃṇo Siri Kausikiputa

There have been other places in western Vidarbha which yielded large hoards of potin coins of the Sātavāhanas. The important ones are the Tarhālā hoard and the Risod hoard.

The exact size of the Pusad hoard is not yet known but the information collected from various sources has been collated and presented in this paper. The numerical summary of the known coins is approximately as given below.

Pusad Hoard

Basic contents of 600 coins examined:

Coins legend	approximate number found
<i>Raṃṇo Sebaka</i>	200+
<i>Raṃṇo Viga</i>	4
<i>Raṃṇo Subeana</i>	2
<i>Raṃṇo Suryamitasa</i>	3
<i>Dharmabhadra</i>	1
<i>Pātālatoritasa</i>	20
<i>Raṃṇo Kuṭapādasa</i>	3
<i>Raṃṇo Kukuṭakhādasa</i>	5
<i>Sagamāna Mahāgrāmikas</i>	8
<i>Mahāgrāmikasa Zataṃyā</i>	1

<i>Gobhadasa</i>	2
<i>Raṃṇo Siri Kausikiputasa</i>	16
<i>Raṃṇo Siri Sātakanisa</i>	13
<i>Raṃṇo Siri Sādakanisa</i>	5
<i>Raṃṇo Siri Sādavāhanasa</i>	45
<i>Roman denarius of Augustus Caesar</i>	1

In addition to these copper coins there were three lead coins of Sebaka and 12 of Siri Satakarni. There were a large number of un-inscribed fractions and coins with uncertain or truncated legends which would take the hoard to a figure of nearly 600+ coins. This hoard is a treasure for Indian history as it throws welcome light on the history of pre-Sātavāhana dynasties in Maharashtra. For example, it was believed that king Sebaka must have ruled in Andhra Pradesh near the Hyderabad region. Now with the discovery of hundreds of Sebaka coins from Marāṭhawādā, there is no doubt that king Sebaka must have ruled in the Pusad-Nanded region. He must have been followed in the 2nd –1st centuries by rulers such as Viga, Kukuṭapāda, Kukuṭakhāda, Pātālatārita and Mahāgrāmika. On the other hand, these rulers might have had good commercial relations with Bhadra-Mitra kings in eastern Vidarbha near Pavanār, a fact which is evidenced by find of coins of Suryamitra, Subeṇa and Dharmabhadra. A stray coin of Gobhadra also indicates relations with the south Chandrapur district of Maharashtra or the Andhra region and the Roman denarius indicates international trade links. Both coins of Dharmabhadra and Gobhadra are not illustrated in this paper but the author has examined them in the groups of coins found from Pusad.

The typology has the following things in common.

1. The obverse predominantly has a bull walking to right. In extremely few cases the bull is replaced by an elephant on the coins of Sebaka and Kuṭapāda.
2. The reverse has two bold symbols standing on double orbed circles. The objects standing on the orbs are sṛivatsa, trīratna, indradvaja or a simple tree with five leaves.
3. The bull is generally topped by a clear svastika or a couple of simplified plus-like svastikas. The bull is also flanked by indradvaja on the left and a three-arched hill with river on the right.
4. The river is shown intricately with fish, tortoise and aquatic animals.
5. In most cases a three- or six-arched hill is shown with a river and fish, tortoise and aquatic animals.
6. The reverse generally has a linear and/or beaded border.

The exceptional type of Abhiṣeka Lakṣmi is known from the coin of Kuṭapāda. This coin is so intricately designed that it throws light on the social life and development of the iconography and style of that period. Cunningham describes Hieun Tsiang's journey to Kukuṭapādagiri or Cock-foot Mountain, a place which had a mountain named Kukuṭapāda, or cock's foot, remarkable for its three bold peaks²². A Buddhist monastery named Kukuṭārāma was built at Pataliputra, where a monk named Bhadda dwelt.

According to Buddhaghosha, this ārama was built by a Shreṣṭhi named Kukuṭaseṭṭhi²³. In short, Kukuṭapāda means cock's foot and the names beginning with Kukuṭa were known for people as well as mountains and regions in ancient India. So it is possible that there was a three-peaked mountain somewhere in the Nanded district of Marāṭhawādā and that the chief of that region was called king Kukuṭakhāda or Kuṭapāda who issued the coins published below. The three-arched hill seen on a coin below is perhaps a representation of the Kukuṭapāda hill as it fits well with the description given by Hieun Tsiang viz. "Then after trying in vain and to take farewell of king Ajātaśatru he proceeds to the cock's-foot mountain, enters it at the triple peak, and sits down inside to await the coming of Maitraya".

The coin published by Ashok Singh Thakur²⁴ throws light on the succession of king Sebaka. Some Sebaka coins show clear countermarks of the Ujjaini symbol. This was most probably done by the Sātavāhanas when they conquered Marāṭhawādā and Vidarbha. It is however not certain if they counter-struck the coins then current or

the ones already in circulation a century earlier. It is possible that coins of a king like Sebaka, which were minted in very large numbers, were current in the market for more than a century and the victor's armies counter-struck anything that came into their hands. So we have to be cautious in fixing the chronology of these kings. The only fact that is conclusive is that these coins were struck in the pre-Sātavāhana era.

This paper is only a preliminary report on the hoard and a more detailed study will be published later. A few sample coins of the different rulers are published below.

5. Coin of King Sebaka, Copper, 11.56 g, 24 mm

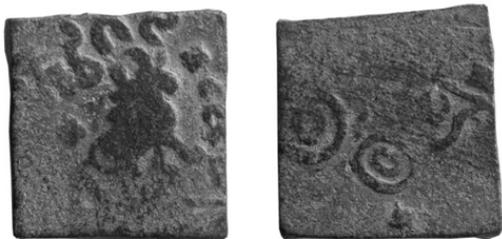


Obv: Standing bull to right with bold Aśokan Brāhmī legend on back: *Raṁṇo Sebakaa*. A triangle-headed standard near the tail of the bull and a simplified svastika above the hump is seen prominently, river to lower right, with fish and tortoise, originating from a six-arched hill and going around the bull. The hill is topped by a simplified svastika.

Rev: Two bold symbols, one resembling a *srīvatsa* upon a circle and the other showing *trīratna* capped by a little taurine. Two plus-mark like simplified svastika on left top and bottom corner.

Such coins were published in the past by several scholars. The first to report them was V.V. Mirashi²⁵ followed by M.G. Dikshit,²⁶ R. K. Sethi²⁷, A. H. Siddiqui²⁸, Shreekanth Reddy²⁹ and others. Mirashi attributed this coin to the third century BC and was promptly opposed by the editor A.S. Altekar who thought the legend belonged to the 3rd century AD³⁰. R.K. Sethi published more coins with bull and elephant types. He tried to connect Sebaka to Prakāśa Śiva Sebaka belonging to the second-third centuries AD, an unacceptable theory according to P.L. Gupta, who strongly refuted it in his editorial capacity of the Numismatic Digest³¹. G.T.V. Sastri added to a Sebaka sealing to this platform. This was a mistaken reading but Sastri's observation that the *ka*-ending rulers like Simuka and Sebaka could have ruled closer to each other is well taken³². The coins were found from varied places like Hyderabad, Indore, Paithan and Marāṭhawādā. This led the scholars to debate the place of origin of king Sebaka and his period. Wild speculation ensued attributing Sebaka to different periods ranging from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD. The date of the Sātavāhanas was also not certain in those days of limited research. Now that the date of the Sātavāhanas is certainly narrowed down to the period 1st century BC to the 1st cent AD, we can surely place Sebaka and his family to the pre-Sātavāhana era of the 1st-2nd centuries BC and confirm that their area of rule was confined to the Nanded-Pusad region of Marāṭhawādā.

6. Coin of King Vigra, Copper, 17.22 g, 24x24 mm



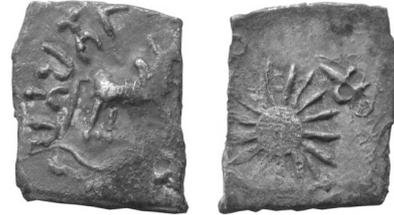
The only other known example of this coin was brought to light by me from a single coin found at Paithan³³. Later Siddiqui also added a coin of the same ruler discovered from the Nanded area³⁴.

Obv.: Standing bull to right with bold Aśokan Brāhmī legend above:

Raṁṇo Vigasa. A triangle-headed standard near the tail of the bull and a simplified svastika above the hump is seen prominently. A six-arched hill stands to the right topped by a simplified svastika. The river originating from the hill is worn out.

Rev: Two bold symbols, one resembling a *srīvatsa* upon a circle and the other showing *trīratna* capped by a little taurine. Two plus-mark-like simplified svastika seen in the field.

7. Coin of Pātālatārīta, Copper, 6.61 g, 20x22 mm



Obv: Bull to right standing on symbolised river showing fish. Legend in Brāhmī characters beginning at 8 'O clock reads *pātālatori...*

Rev: A radiant sun symbol in the centre with fifteen rays surrounded by *srīvatsa* and indistinct symbols.

8. Coin of Kuṭapāda, Copper, 8.01 g, 22x22 mm



Copper, square, 22x22 mm, 8.01 g.

Obv: Abhiṣeka Lakṣmi seated in *padmāsana* on lotus holding the stems of two lotus flowers. Two elephants standing on smaller lotus flowers bathing Lakṣmi with water. River to right, with fish and tortoise, originating from a three-arched hill. Brāhmī legend on top: *Raṁṇo Kuṭapādasa*. The whole enclosed in a dotted border.

Rev: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other resembling a circle within a circle topped by *indrādhvaja* or triangle-headed standard. The whole enclosed in an ornate rectangle.

9. Coin of Mahāgrāmika, 4.27 g, 19x23 mm



Obv: Elephant to right with trunk upraised. A cross or simplified svastika is seen on the back of the elephant. Legend on top: *Saga(mana ma)hāgrāmikasa*.

Rev: Ujjaini symbol of double orbs with four crosses in corner, of which two are visible on the flan.

10. Coin of Mahāgrāmika Zataṁyā



A ruler by such a name was never known before. He has come to light with the discovery of this coin.

Copper 5.07 g, 18x20 mm.

Obv: Elephant to right with trunk upraised. A trident is seen in the front of the elephant. Legend on top: *Mahāgāmikasa zatamāya*.
Rev: An ornate symbol made of four taurins shares the common circular base with a pellet.

11. Coin of King Suryamitra 7.75 g, 20x24 mm



Obv: Standing Śiva on lotus, holding a staff in right hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* in the left. A tree to right with five leaves within a railing decorated with a *nandipada*. A *śrivatsa* tops the sapling on the left. Brāhmī legend to left: *Raṁṇo Sur(yamitasa)*
Rev: Standing bull to right with an eight-spoke wheel on the back and a *Kukkuṭa dvaja* or cock-headed standard in railing, on the right.

Such a coin was published earlier by Shastri and Gupta³⁵. Later, Narayan Deshmukh reported another variety of the coin of the same ruler with the depiction of *gajalakṣmi*³⁶. A sealing of Satyabhadra was also found in an excavation at Kaundinyapur³⁷. Dozens of such coins are found at Pauni and Paunar, hence it can be concluded that the coin published here and found at Pusad must have been struck at an eastern Vidarbhan mint (such as Pauni or Paunar), where the ruler belonged and it came in trade to the western Vidarbhan region of Pusad

12. Coin of King Subeṇa, 7.58 g, 19x22 mm



Obv: Standing Śiva on lotus, holding a staff in right hand and a *kamaṇḍalu* in the left. A tree to right with five leaves within a railing decorated with *nandipada*. Brāhmī legend to left: (*Raṁṇo*) *Subenasa*.
Rev: Standing bull to right with an eight-spoke wheel on the back and an indistinct *Kukkuṭa dvaja* or cock-headed standard in railing, on the right.

Only two such coins were discovered in this hoard and it is the first time that this king has been brought to light. The other coin bears a clear legend *Raṁṇo* preceding the name of the king Subenasa. The Sanskrit form of Subena will be Subeṇa who must have been a close relative of Suryamitra. Looking at the similarity of symbols and script, it appears that both Suryamitra and Subeṇa must have ruled in the same area and struck coins for the same kingdom. As the majority of coins of Suryamitra hail from eastern Vidarbha, I am inclined to assign Subeṇa to this branch of the Bhadra-Mitra rulers, rather than include him in the eastern family of Sebaka-Pāda-Mahāgrāmikas. The name of this ruler is noteworthy because of its phonetic resemblance with Beṇṇakata, the region of eastern Vidarbha mentioned in the Hathigumpha inscription. It is mentioned in the inscription that the armies of Khāravēla landed at the banks of the river Kanhabēṇā without caring for Sātakarṇi and scared the people of Asikanagara.³⁸ The Nāśik cave inscription pertaining to the 19th year of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Pulumāvi also mentions Asika as a region won by the Sātavāhanas. Similarly the cave inscription of Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi mentions him as Benākaṭakasvāmī. Thus, there can be no doubt that we have discovered a ruler by the name of Subeṇa who ruled the kingdom of Beṇṇakata during the 2nd century BC.

13. Coin of King Sādavāhana, 10.14 g, 25 mm

A large number of such coins were reported earlier from Hyderabad and Maharashtra. They were brought to light by V.V. Mirashi³⁹, M.G. Dixit & S.M. Joglekar⁴⁰ and V.B. Kolte⁴¹.



Obv: Elephant to right with trunk upraised. A triangle-headed standard in railing flanked by two *triratna* symbols is seen on the back of the elephant. Legend at the top: *Raṁṇo siri sādavāhana(sa)*. Traces of leaves of a tree are seen in the lower right corner.
Rev: Ujjaini symbol designed with double orbs around a pellet. The four corners are decorated with intricately designed *triratna* symbols.

Some important interpretations were made from the coins of Pātālorita and Kuṭapāda. These coins helped to correct some mis-attributions made in the past by scholars. This has been discussed in detail.

Coins of Pātālorita: not Patalatadata

Amiteshwar Jha and Laxmikant Varma published two new pre-Sātavāhana coins recently⁴². They read the legend on the coins as *Patalatadatasa* and *Bhapatalatadatasa*. Although the provenance of the coins is not known, they bear close similarity to the coins of the Sebaka rulers found in Hyderabad and Vidarbha region. While discussing the legend the authors contended that it had to be either *Bhapatalatadatasa* or *Bhupataladatasa*. The first or the larger coin illustrated by them does not bear the initial letter *Bhu* like the second smaller denomination. The authors read the legend as *Bhapatalatadatasa* but omitted the letter *ta* in the discussion and concluded that the name of the issuer was *Bhupataladatasa*.

A close look at the coins will show that the letter *ta* indeed exists on the coin and cannot be omitted without reason. Similarly the letter *da* has been misread. It is clearly *ṛ*⁴³ as seen on the smaller coins published by the authors. Thus, the full legend can be restored as *Pātāloritasa* or *Pātāloritasa* on the larger coin, and *Bhūpātāloritasa* on the smaller one.



Fig1. Legend Pātāloritasa

Pātāloritasa does not give a meaningful legend unless it is related to *Pātālatārita*: the one who is saved by the underworld *pātala*. Thus, the legend becomes meaningful as: (coin) of the king who took refuge in *pātāla* or the world under the earth. The longer title *Bhūpātāloritasa* would mean, (coin) of the king who took refuge both on land and the world under the earth.

The three *lokas* or *triloka* are well known as Svargaloka, Bhūloka and Pātāla according to Hindu mythology. The gods ruled over the Svarga (heaven), man over Bhumi (land) and the demons under the earth. Great warrior kings like Mahābālī and Pātālarāvaṇa are said to have ruled the Pātāla for ages. According to the Purāṇas⁴⁴ the description of Pātāla is mystical and intriguing. It goes as follows:

“The Pātāla consists of seven regions one below each other under the earth. They are named as Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Rasātala, Mahātala and Pātāla. The Pātāla is seventy thousand yojanas high, each division being ten thousand yojanas. The earth in this region has different hues like white, black red or yellow. Once Nārada, the great sage, on his return to Svarga said that Pātāla was more beautiful than Svarga. The Nāgas ruled there peacefully as daytime is lit by the sun and night by the moon. There is neither heat nor cold so the Nāgas

live happily without feeling the passage of time. The Pātāla is the abode of serpents. The great snakes named Vāsuki, Dhanañjaya, Śaṅkha, Gulika, Śveta, Kambala, Aśvadhara and Devadatta live here. The lustre of the diamonds on their hoods keeps the Pātāla always illuminated...

Mahābāli lives in Sutala meditating on Viṣṇu. To please Indra, Mahāviṣṇu once went to Mahābāli on earth and by deceit took all his possessions and, binding him with Varuṇapaśa, pushed him to Sutala through a hole made on earth. Later, Mahāviṣṇu felt that he did a wrong in deceiving Mahābāli and, to remedy the sin he committed, he even now acts as a gatekeeper to Mahābāli in Sutala.... Under the Pātāla is Ādiśeṣa, a tāmasik form of Mahāviṣṇu. The beautiful daughters of the serpent kings stand around Ādiśeṣa with their bewitching smiles and amorous movements of their bodies. The mighty Ādiśeṣa sits there worshipped by all for the welfare of the world”.

Many rulers in the past took pride in calling themselves the descendents of Mahābāli, the lord of Pātāla. The king who issued the coins discussed here must have taken pride in calling himself the saviour of Pātāla and considered his family a descendent of either Ādiśeṣa or some other king who ruled the Pātāla such as Mahābāli, Pātālarāvaṇa or Pātālaketu. The title Pātālatorīta only shows his connection with the mythological underworld.

Somkuwar has illustrated a nice coin of Pātālatorīta. That coin does not show the traces of the letter *Bhu* and the legend is only Pātālatorīta. I have seen nearly ten more such coins in private collections none of which bears the prefix *bhu*. The letter *bhu* on the coin published by Jha and Varma is too wide compared to other letters on the coin and may be part of some symbol at the back of the bull. There exists a variant legend with the second *ta* engraved as *to*. This would make the legend *pātālatorīta*, which would make the meaning obscure unless it indicates the door decoration of pātāla. Thus the name would mean “(coin) of the door decoration of pātāla”. The other choice of reading is *patalatorīta*, which would mean decorated with the leaves. This is not a very high-sounding name for a ruler, hence the legend is most likely to be only Pātālatorīta on all known coins. Shailendra Bhandare commented on this reading and proposed to read Pātāloḷataśa⁴⁵ But the *ri* on the coins is totally different than the *ḷa* which he has proposed to read. For the time being, instead of getting into interpretations, I proposed to stick to the original reading as Pātālatorīta

Some new coins of the ruler are published below:

14. Copper, square, 10.71 g, 22x24 mm.



Obv.: Counter-struck on a coin bearing an Ujjaini symbol and traces of legend consisting of the letter *sa* in Brāhmī at 11 o'clock. Bull to left standing on symbolised river, showing aquatic animals. To the left stand a little taurine and a tree with seven leaves in a railing on a three-arched hill. Legend in Brāhmī characters beginning at 10 o'clock reads *patala*...

Rev.: Counter-struck on a coin showing very indistinct traces of under-type. A radiant sun symbol in the centre with sixteen rays surrounded by svastika, *indradvaja*, *srīvatsa* and svastika; *indradvaja*, *srīvatsa* arranged clockwise from 12 o'clock.

15. Copper, rectangular, 6.61 g, 20x22 mm



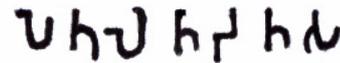
Obv.: Bull to right standing on symbolised river showing fish. Legend in Brāhmī characters beginning at 8 o'clock reads *patalatori*...

Rev.: A radiant sun symbol in the centre with fifteen rays surrounded by *srīvatsa* and indistinct symbols.

16. Copper or bronze, square with one corner broken, 8.26g, 25x27 mm



Obv.: Counter-struck on a coin bearing traces of legend consisting of the *aḷṣara ṅo* in Brāhmī at 2 o'clock. Bull to left with legend in Brāhmī characters beginning at 11 o'clock reading *talatorīta*...



Rev.: Counter-struck on a coin showing very indistinct traces. A radiant sun symbol in the centre with fifteen rays surrounded by *indradvaja*, svastika, *srīvatsa* and svastika.

17. Copper, square, 2.06 g, 12x12 mm.



Obv.: Bull to left with other details worn out.

Rev.: A radiant sun symbol in the centre with sixteen or eighteen rays.

These coins were found at Pusad with those of a variety of rulers and dynasties such as the Sebaka, Vīgra, Mahāgrāmikas, Mitras, Pādas and the Sātavāhanas. Somkuwar mentioned the absence of Vīgra coins in the Pusad hoard, but that is not true as nearly four Vīgra coins were encountered there. The coins of Pātālatorīta are interesting in many ways. Firstly, because they bear the title Pātālatorīta but do not show the word *raṃṅo*. This phenomenon is similar to the Mahāgrāmika coins⁴⁶ where the legend shows conspicuous absence of the title *raṃṅo* but reads only *mahagamikasa*. Secondly they show a variety of types and denominations. As many as five different types are known, four being published here ranging from two grams to eleven grams. This shows that the ruler was not short-lived. The king must have reigned at least for a decade. Thirdly, some of the coins are counter-struck on an earlier type. The legend available on the under-type are the *aḷṣaras sa* and *ṅo*. It is almost impossible to attribute the under-type to a known coinage except for the speculation that one would tend towards a Sātavāhana type. The *aḷṣaras* are written outwardly unlike Sātavāhana coins found from the same region and the orbs of the Ujjaini symbol are also a bit different. So we are left with no choice but to wait for a clearer

specimen showing the under-type. It is, however, highly likely that this ruler could have countermarked one of the Sātavāhana coins. This phenomenon occurs in Sātakarṇi and Nahapāna's coinage where both rulers were engaged in constant fights with each other as is evidenced by Nahapāna's silver coins counterstruck by Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi and the latter's copper coins countermarked by Nahapāna⁴⁷. The history of Pātālorita and the Sātavāhanas could be similar.

The smaller coin published here is similar to coin no. 2 illustrated by Jha and Varma and another one shown by Chandrashekhar Gupta. Gupta's comment that these coins were probably found from a site near Pusad seems to be correct⁴⁸.

As the coins are found with those of the Sebaka, Vīgra, Mahāgrāmikas, Mītras, Pādas and the Sātavāhanas, one may conclude that they belong to a ruler of the 2nd-1st centuries BC who adopted the title of Pātālorita.

Coins of Kuṭapāda: not Vākāṭaka

A.H. Siddiqui has published five coins found in Marāṭhawādā region and has tried to read the names of Vākāṭaka rulers on four of them⁴⁹. He has tried to read *Vākāṭaka Sarvasena* on the obverse and *Vākāṭaka Sarva* on the reverse of three different coins. In addition to this he has also attempted to read *Rajño Vigasena* on another coin. He has also added an illustration of a coin of a Sebaka ruler found with the above mentioned four coins. This paper of Siddiqui contains a number of errors. Not only in that the coins do not belong to the Vākāṭakas; there are serious mistakes in reading the paleography and interpretation of the data.

It was correctly pointed out by Handa in his editorial capacity that the coins in question were pre-Sātavāhana issues and not Vākāṭaka money which would be post-Sātavāhana⁵⁰. Amiteshwar Jha also referred to Siddiqui's paper and suggested that the legend could be *Kukuṭasa*⁵¹. No one has however come up with the correct attribution of the coins published by Siddiqui.

In the meantime a large hoard of Vidarbhan copper coins was found at Pusad in Marāṭhawādā. This has been well published by Chandrashekhar Gupta⁵², Ashok Singh Thakur⁵³ and Rajesh Somkuwar⁵⁴. These authors have published coins of the Sebaka, Sātavāhanas, Pātālorita, Mahāgrāmika and Suryamitra. They had limited information on the hoard and hence they did not list lead coins of the Sebaka, copper coins of Vīgra and the new discovery of coins of Kuṭapāda reported for the first time in this paper. Jha's suggestion of the reading *Kukuṭasa* was almost there but for the suffix *pāda* which was off the flan on Siddiqui's coins. The full legend on these coins is *Kuṭapādasa* as can be seen on the specimens published in this paper. Once this is accepted the legends read by Siddiqui become redundant and his theory of attributing them to the Vākāṭakas collapses. The first coin of Siddiqui⁵⁵ clearly shows the traces of *Kuṭa*, which he restored as and saw unseen letters *sa va* to guess *Sarvasena*. He tried to read the same legend on the reverse also which is imaginary as no letter is engraved on the reverse. Similarly the restoration of *Vigasena* on coin no. 3 is wishful thinking as the coin is certainly that same as that of Vīgra published long ago in the ONS Newsletter⁵⁶. The coins published by Siddiqui are therefore attributed to the Sebaka, Vīgra and Kuṭapāda. These rulers must have occupied the Marāṭhawādā territories in the pre-Sātavāhana era of 1st-2nd centuries BC. The coins of Kuṭapāda are discussed below.

The name Kuṭapāda or Kukuṭapāda is unusual for Vidarbha. No such name is known from any inscription or seal from this region. The Sanskrit form of Kukuṭapāda will be Kukkuṭapāda meaning the foot of a cock. For the purpose of uniformity the ruler is referred to as Kukuṭapāda in this paper. Names such as Kukkuṭa and Kukuṭapādagiri are known from other parts of India. The closest to ancient Vidarbha a similar name is known in a Kalachuri era stone inscription. The inscription of Kalachuri era 866 of king Jajalladeva records that the king of Kukkuṭa gave fixed tribute or presents to the former. Kukkuṭa in Sanskrit is translated as wild cock hence the place of Kukkuṭa must have wild cocks in abundance. Scholars have tried

to trace this place in Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh⁵⁷. It is possible that a similar place existed in the Marāṭhawādā region during the pre-Christian era when king Kuṭapāda ruled. The inscription actually mentions that Jajalladeva claims to have received tributes from chiefs of the maṇḍalas of Dakṣiṇa Kośala, Āndhra, Khimdi (Orissa), Vairāgara, Lāñjika, Bhaṇḍārā, Talahāri, Daṇḍakāpura, Nandavali and Kukkuṭa⁵⁸. The places mentioned in this list are far from Madhya Pradesh. Vairāgara is in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra and Lāñji in the Balaghat district close to Bhaṇḍārā. Thus, there is a possibility that the last two names Nandavali and Kukkuṭa could be respectively Nanded and Kukkuṭa, an unknown place near Pusad.

Other examples of a phonetically similar place existed in Bihar. Hieun Tsiang reported a Kukuṭapādagiri or Cock-foot mountain or a Gurupāda mountain in Uttar Pradesh⁵⁹. Cunningham identified a place called Kukuṭapāda vihara twenty miles north-east of Baudhha Gaya. He describes Hieun Tsiang's travel to this place which had a mountain named Kukkuṭapāda, or cock's foot, remarkable for its three bold peaks⁶⁰. A Buddhist monastery named Kukkuṭārāma was built at Pataliputra where a monk named Bhadda dwelt. According to Buddhaghosha this ārāma was built by a Shreṣṭhi named Kukuṭaseṭṭhi⁶¹. In short Kukuṭapāda means cock's foot and the names beginning with Kukkuṭa or Kukuṭa were known for people as well as mountains and regions in ancient India. So it is possible that there was a three-peaked mountain somewhere in the Nanded district of Marāṭhawādā, that the chief of that region was called king Kukuṭapāda and that he issued the coins published below. The three-arched hill seen on coin no. 2 below is perhaps a representation of the Kukuṭapāda hill. The name Kukuṭapāda is not encountered on any other Indian coin but the representation of Kukkuṭa or a cockerel is not unknown to ancient Indian numismatics. The cockerel had religious importance and it attained royal favours when it appeared on the coins of Ayodhya⁶². The cockerel-headed standard or *Kukkuṭa dhavaja* is well known on the coins of Suryamitra found in Vidarbha⁶³.

The coins occur in many different types with two principle legends. The first being *Raṃño Kuṭapādasa* and the other *Raṃño Kukuṭakhādasa*. At first glance it looks like the akṣara *khā* is an inverted form of *pā* and it must have been a die cutter's mistake who inadvertently engraved *khā* in place of *pā*. But it may be possible that the name Kukuṭakhāda indeed existed and that the king of this name could have been the brother, son, father or a relative of king Kuṭapāda. The meaning of *Kukuṭakhāda* is obscure. *Khāda* might be a Prākṛit form of Skanda though the correct word for the latter is *Khada*. Skanda was connected to Kukkuṭa in many ways just as he was associated with the royal bird, the peacock. Shastri and Gupta identified the capital standard on Suryamitra's coins as *Kukkuṭa dhavaja* of God *Skanda-Kārttikeya*. The wind indicator or weather cock is also known as *Kukkuṭākara vātaskandalakṣaṇa*⁶⁴. The connection of cock and Skanda is well known from the Purāṇas. The Agnipurāṇa mentions Skanda holding Śakti in one hand and a cock in the left. The Śivapurāṇa also indicates that one of the four hands of Skanda holds Kukkuṭa. The Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa describes the four forms of Kārttikeya as Kumāra, Skanda, Viśakha and Guha. The right hand of Kumara holds a cock and a bell.⁶⁵ The Mahābhārata tells us that Karttikeya was offered various gifts by different Gods, such as a spear by Indra, a peacock by Garuda and a cock by Varuna or Aruna. Many scholars believe that the Kukkuṭadvaja or the cock-crested column found at Lala Bhagat near Kanpur from the first century BC is the earliest symbolic representation of the deity⁶⁶. Thus the association of Karttikeya with Kukkuṭa is well established. Therefore, in all probability there existed a pair of rulers named Kukuṭapāda and Kukuṭakhāda belonging to the same dynasty who ruled in the Pusad-Nanded region in the first-second centuries BC. Looking at the types of coins issued by these rulers, they do not appear to be petty chiefs but proper royal sovereigns using the regal title *Raṃño*. Such a title is conspicuously absent on the coins of Pātālorita and Mahāgrāmika, found in the same region⁶⁷.

Coins with the legend *Raṃṇo Kuṭapāda*

18. Copper, round, 16x17 mm, 2.73 g



Obv.: Elephant to right with trunk upraised. Brāhmī legend on top: (*Raṃṇo Kuṭapāda*).

Rev.: Worn out but faint signs of orbs seen at the bottom.

19. Copper, square, 22x22 mm, 8.01 g



Obv.: Abhiṣeka Lakṣmi seated in *padmāsana* on a lotus and holding the stems of two lotus flowers. Two elephants standing on smaller lotus flowers bathing Lakṣmi with water. River to right, with fish and tortoise, originating from a three-arched hill (which is perhaps a representation of the Kukuṭapāda hill). Brāhmī legend on top: (*Raṃṇo Kuṭapāda*). The whole enclosed in dotted border.

Rev.: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other resembling a circle within a circle topped by *indradvaja* or triangle-headed standard. The whole enclosed in triple border of lines and dots.

20. Copper, rectangular, 20x22 mm, 13.41 g



Obv.: Standing bull to right with a small svastika-like cross above. Brāhmī legend on top: (*Raṃṇo Kuṭapāda*)

Rev.: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other resembling a circle within a circle topped by a *srīvatsa* symbol. The whole enclosed in a double border of lines.

Coins with the legend *Raṃṇo Kukuṭakhāda*

21. Copper, square, 22x22 mm, 9.50 g



Obv.: Standing elephant to right with Brāhmī legend on back: *Raṃṇo Kukuṭakhāda*

Rev.: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other resembling a tree in railing topped by *indradvaja* or a triangle-headed standard. The whole enclosed in a beaded border. There is

some doubling of strike on both the sides.

22. Copper, rectangular, 19x21 mm, 7.91 g



Obv.: Standing bull to right with Brāhmī legend on back: (*Raṃṇo Kukuṭakhāda*). A triangle-headed standard near the tail of the bull and a simplified svastika above the hump is seen prominently.

Rev.: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other resembling a *srīvatsa* upon a circle. The whole enclosed in a beaded border.

23. Copper, rectangular, 18x19 mm, 4.33 g



Obv.: Standing bull to right with Brāhmī legend on back: *Raṃṇo Kukuṭa(khāda)sa* with *sa* inscribed sideways. A triangle headed standard near the tail of the bull and a svastika above the hump is seen prominently.⁶⁸

Rev.: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other resembling a *srīvatsa* upon a circle. The whole enclosed in beaded border.

24. Copper, rectangular, 15x19 mm, 3.51 g



Obv.: As coin 23 above but much worn except for clear Brāhmī legend: *Kukuṭakhāda* with the last letter *sa* inscribed sideways.

Rev.: Two bold symbols, one showing *trīratna* and the other unclear. The whole enclosed in a beaded border.

To summarise, we can say that the coins of Kuṭapāda and Kukuṭakhāda belong to the same family of the Sebaka. The symbolism has the following things in common.

1. The obverse has a bull or elephant on coins of both the rulers.
2. The reverse has two bold symbols standing on double-orbed circles. The objects standing on the orbs are *srīvatsa*, *trīratna*, *indradvaja* or a simple tree with five leaves.
3. The bull is generally topped by a clear svastika or a simplified plus-like svastika. The bull is also flanked with *indradvaja* on the left and a three-arched hill with river in the right.
4. The river is shown with fish, tortoise and aquatic animals.
5. In most cases a three- or six-arched hill is shown with a river and fish, tortoise and aquatic animals.

The coins are mostly square but for the unique exception of the first coin (no 18) published in this section of the paper. The variations in the coins of Kuṭapāda are much more prolific than those of the Sebaka or Pātālorita. The weight standard ranges from 2.73g to 13.41g. The typology does not only have bull and elephant motifs but also shows a good, artistic depiction of Gajalakṣmi. In addition to this, the title of the king, *Raṁṇo*, is clearly displayed. All these facts indicate that the king Kuṭapāda and/or Kukuṭakhāda was a much stronger ruler in the Sebaka-Vigra-Pāda family, who ruled prior to the Sātavāhanas in the Pusad-Nanded region of Marāṭhawādā, where other rulers of the family, namely Pātālorita and Mahāgrāmika, also dwelt and enjoyed a uniform currency system of predominantly square bull-type coins.

Roman coin from the hoard

This important coin shows that the Romans had contact with the eastern Vidarbha, too. Previously, Roman coins have been found from Adam⁶⁹, Chandrapur and Sampewada and Tadali in Bhandārā district. The coins found in Sampewada were gold aurei of Commodus⁷⁰ and those found at Adam were gold aurei of Augustus and Tiberius. The earliest coin from Vidarbha was the aureus found at Chandrapur struck by A. Hirtius, the praetor of Julius Caesar⁷¹. At a later date, many silver coins and bullae were excavated at Adam by Nath. These were very similar to the coin published here. They mainly consisted of denarii of Augustus and Tiberius⁷².

Silver Denarius, heavily worn with two holes, 1.96 g, 14x15 mm

Obv.: Laureate head of Augustus to right, traces of legend CAESAR AVGVSTVS DIVI PATER PATRIAE.

Rev.: Caius and Lucius standing with two shields, traces of legend, AVGVSTI COS DESIC PRINC IVVENT, below C.L.CAESARES.



This coin may be a copy of the Roman denarius produced in India during ancient times.

The Pusad hoard has yielded a great deal of information. The entire data remains to be analysed properly as it lies in many different hands. The variations in denominations and weights would indicate a well-developed metrology. Basically the coins weighed in the range of 2 g to 20 g. The rulers who hailed from this region are Sebaka, Vigra, Pātālorita, Kuṭapāda, Kukuṭakhāda, Mahāgrāmika Zatomaya and Sagamāna Mahāgrāmika, to be followed by Kausikiputra Sātakarṇi and Siri Sātakarṇi. On the other hand, the rulers who commercially transacted with them were Dharmbhadrā, Suryamitra, Subeṇa from western Vidarbha, Gobhadra from Andhra and also the Roman emperors such as Augustus and Tiberius. It is worth noting that the absence of coins of Dāmabhadrā, Satyabhadrā, Krishnamitra and Bhumimitra from the eastern Vidarbha is conspicuous in this hoard. As is seen from the large presence of coins of king Sātavāhana and Kausikiputra, it can be reasonably concluded that the family met its end at the hands of the Sātavāhanas who must have defeated the existing rulers in Marāṭhawādā, Pauni and other areas of Vidarbha to establish the mighty Sātavāhana empire. It is also interesting to note that after defeating either Subeṇa or his successors, Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi⁷³ called himself Benākatakṣvāmi.⁷⁴

Tarhālā and Risoḍ hoards: the north-western Vidarbhan rulers

A hoard of potin coins of the Sātavāhanas was found in 2006 at a place called Risoḍ in Vidarbha in Akola district. The very large hoard of nearly 5000 coins was reportedly brought to a coppersmith who promptly contacted some notable coin dealers of India and traded the hoard. The coins were dispersed immediately. My thanks go to some generous coin collectors like Rajesh Somkuwar, who brought me

pictures of the important finds for the hoard. I am thankful to Shri Somkuwar of Nagpur and Shri Taylor of Akot for all the information they have provided.

In the past, many such small hoards have been reported from Vidarbha. A small hoard of 183 coins was found at Brahmāpuri in the Chāndā district in 1888⁷⁵. The most important one was the Tarhālā hoard reported by V.V. Mirashi⁷⁶ and found in 1939. This hoard, comprising about 1600 coins, yielded the names of

Siri Sātakarṇi
Siri Puḷumāvi
Śivasiri Puḷumāvi.
Kumbha Sātakarṇi
Karṇa Sātakarṇi
Śaka Sātakarṇi
Skanda Sātakarṇi
Rudra Sātakarṇi
Vijaya Sātakarṇi and
Siri Pulahāmavi

The Risoḍ hoard was a much bigger hoard, which obviously yielded more coins including the unique discovery of two coins of a hitherto unknown Sātavāhana ruler, Mahā Sātakarṇi. The total number of coins estimated with the help of reported numbers from various coin dealers and collectors can vaguely be tabulated as:

Approximate number of coins in the hoard:	5100
Siri Sātakarṇi :	nearly 3000 pcs
Yajña Sātakarṇi:	nearly 1000 pcs
Siri Puḷumāvi:	nearly 1000 pcs
Skanda Sātakarṇi:	4
Kumbha Sātakarṇi:	10
Śivasiri Puḷumāvi:	50
Mahā Sātakarṇi:	2
Vijaya Sātakarṇi:	1

The hoard did not have coins of Karṇa, Śaka and Rudra Sātakarṇi, found in the Tarhālā hoard.

1. Coin of Mahā Sātakarṇi

The coins of Mahā Sātakarṇi have been the star discovery of this hoard. This is a completely new addition to the historical personages known from the coins. Such a ruler had not previously been known from any numismatic, inscriptional or literary sources. With thanks to the people who preserved this information I take the pleasure of publishing the coin here.



Potin 3.44 g, 18x18 mm

Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription above the elephant: Rājño mahā sātakarṇi(sa).

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with a pellet in each orb.

It is very difficult to place the ruler in any particular chronology due to the lack of any corroborative evidence. However, looking at the style of the letters and the crudeness of the coin, it may be suggested that he ruled in the latter part of the Sātavāhana period, perhaps closer to the period of Kumbha and Karṇa Sātakarṇi. The Sātavāhana genealogy should then accommodate this new name. It is also possible that this was a title of one of the rulers mentioned in the Purāṇas who are absent from epigraphic and numismatic data. Such rulers mentioned in the Purāṇas include Lambodara, Āpilaka, Meghasvāti, Svāti, Skandasvi, Mṛgendra, Kuntala, Svatikarṇa, Pulomāvi, Arisṭakarṇa, Hāla, Mantalaka or Pattalaka, Purīndrasena, Sundara, Śivasvati and Chakora⁷⁷.

It will not be out of place to publish more pictures of other commonly known coins of the Sātavāhanas found in the Risod hoard. A representative group has been photographed and presented for scholars.

2. Coins of Siri Sātakarṇi



Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño siri sātakaṇi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

Potin 13x14 mm weights: 1.45g, 1.55g, 1.84g, 2.39g, 2.87g, 2.92g, 3.2g, 3.56g

3. Fractions of coins of Siri Sātakarṇi



Potin: 13x14 mm, 1.21g; 12x13 mm, 0.55g, 12x13 mm, 1.02g

4. Coins of Siri Puṣumāvi



Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño Puṣumāvi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

Potin, 19x20 mm, 3.24g; 18x19 mm, 2.47g; 13x14 mm, 0.87g

5. Coins of Siri Yajña Sātakarṇi

Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño siri Yajña sātakaṇi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

Potin: 18-20mm, weights 1.60g, 1.91g, 2.25g, 2.37g, 2.43g, 2.73g, 3.24, 3.55g.



Obverses



Reverses

6. Coin of Kuṃbha Sātakarṇi



Potin: 19x20 mm, 2.47 g.

Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño siri Kubha sātakaṇi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

7. Coin of Skanda Sātakarṇi



Potin, 17x19 mm, 3.13 g.

Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño siri Khada sātakaṇi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

8. Coin of Siva Siri Puḷumāvi



Potin, 18x18 mm, 2.32 g.

Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño Siva siri puḷumāvi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

9. Coin of Vijaya Sātakarṇi



Potin, 18x19 mm, 2.96 g.

Obv.: Standing elephant to right, Brāhmī inscription on the back of the elephant: *Rājño Vijaya sātakarṇi(sa)*.

Rev.: Ujjaini symbol with four orbs.

The hoard is of immense historical importance. It tells us about the long reigns of the Sātavāhana rulers from Siri Sātakarṇi to Vijaya Sātakarṇi and throws light on a new ruler by the name of Mahā Sātakarṇi for the first time in Indian history. It also gives us a wide range of weights of the currency, as diverse as 0.55g to 3.55g. It is quite a problem to decide the number of denominations. Every possible weight from 0.5 g to about 3.6 g exists and, as such, there could be hundreds of denominations. We have observed the same phenomenon with the coins of the Viṣṇukunḍins, published by Meshram⁷⁸. That hoard of 214 coins showed the weight range from 3.03 g to 7.15 g with coins weighing 100 mg apart. The weight range of the Risoḍ hoard thus tells us that there was not much control over the weight of the currency.

Epilogue

With the help of coins we have come to know a large number of rulers, nearly 20 unknown from any other records and 15 of the Sātavāhana family, from ancient Vidarbha. Numismatics has indeed come to our help in restoring the history of this region. The list of rulers from Western Vidarbha is thus restored as:

1. Shreyas
2. Āryadatta
3. Bhumimatra
4. Aśvabandhu
5. Dāmbhadra
6. Satyabhadra
7. Subeṇa
8. Sarvabhadra
9. Dharmabhadra
10. Kanhamitra.
11. Suryamitra

The list of rulers from Eastern Vidarbha is deduced as:

1. Raṃṇo Sebaka
2. Raṃṇo Viga
3. Pātālatārita
4. Raṃṇo Kuṭapāda
5. Raṃṇo Kukuṭakhāda
6. Sagamāna Mahāgrāmika
7. Mahāgrāmika Zataṃāya

To this list we may add the names of Andhra ruler, Sāmigopa and Kāmāvya, whose coins have been found circulating in the eastern Vidarbha and that of Gobhadra whose coppers are known from both eastern and western Vidarbha.

All these areas were apparently conquered by the increasingly powerful Sātavāhana rulers. It is also possible that some rulers existed during the dominance of the Sātavāhanas and were engaged in constant fights with the former, as at least one king, Pātālatorita, is known to have counter-struck coins similar to those of the Sātavāhanas. The coins of Mahāgrāmika and Mahāgrāmika Zataṃāya are so similar to those of the Sātavāhanas that there exists no doubt that they were contemporary rulers.

The presence of following Sātavāhana rulers is evident in Vidarbha from their coin finds:

1. Raṃṇo Siri Chimuka
2. Raṃṇo Siri Sādavāhana
3. Raṃṇo Siri Sātakarṇi or Raṃṇo Siri Sādakarṇi
4. Raṃṇo Siri Sāti
5. Raṃṇo Siri Kochhiputa Sātakarṇi or Raṃṇo Siri Kausikiputa
6. Raṃṇo Siri Yajña Sātakarṇi
7. Raṃṇo Siri Siri Puḷumāvi
8. Raṃṇo Siri Skanda Sātakarṇi
9. Raṃṇo Siri Kumbha Sātakarṇi
10. Raṃṇo Siri Śivasiri Puḷumāvi
11. Raṃṇo Siri Karṇa Sātakarṇi
12. Raṃṇo Siri Śaka Sātakarṇi
13. Raṃṇo Siri Rudra Sātakarṇi
14. Raṃṇo Siri Mahā Sātakarṇi
15. Raṃṇo Siri Vijaya Sātakarṇi.

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THE COINS OF THE PĀRATARĀJAS: A SYNTHESIS

Pankaj Tandon¹

It seems fitting that, at a seminar organized to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Numismatic Society of India, I present a paper that offers a solution to a problem even older than the Society. In 1905, E. J. Rapson published a small group of five coins which he identified as 'Coins with reverse type "Svastika."' ² The coins were unified by the presence on their reverses of a central swastika surrounded by a circular legend. However, they differed in other respects. The first

two coins, which were of silver, featured a bust *right* on the obverse and a reverse legend in Brāhmī letters. The third and fourth coins, also of silver, had a bust *left* on the obverse and the circular legends were in Kharoshthi characters. Finally, the fifth coin, which was made of copper, showed a standing figure facing right and a reverse legend of Kharoshthi characters. The problems posed by these coins were: Who issued these coins? Did they belong in one series? In what order were they issued? When and where were they issued?

Rapson noted that a coin similar to the first two, owned by Mr Rawlins, had been published by Vincent Smith in JASB 1897 and that Smith had assigned the coin (on which he “doubtfully” read the name Arjuna) to the Saurashtran series, presumably meaning the dynasty we now call the Western Kshatrapas. However, Rapson rejected this attribution, on the grounds that the resemblance between the two series was not sufficient and that the provenance of the swastika coins, Jhelum in the Punjab, suggested that the coins were issued in that general area rather than in Saurashtra. However, Rapson himself was unable to make any definitive attribution, arguing only that the dynasty was probably one of Persian or Parthian princes or satraps ruling somewhere in northern Punjab. The Persian connection arose from the partial reading of the legends on the third and fourth coins which indicated that they were issued by a king whose father’s name was Bagapharna, a name clearly Iranian in origin.

Some progress on understanding these coins was made in the interim, but it is only now, over 100 years later, that we can finally answer all of the questions posed by Rapson’s paper. Mukherjee had worked out in his 1972 monograph³ that the coins were issues of a tribe called the Pāratas or Pāradas, as the phrase *Parataraja* was clearly visible on one of Rapson’s coins. Senior collected more coins of the series and made some progress in identifying different types and proposing readings of the legends. But it was only within the last five years that true solutions to the problems were found. In a 2006 paper, I proposed readings for all of the known coins carrying Brāhmī legends, identifying five issuing kings and suggesting a relative and absolute chronology for them.⁴ In a 2007 paper, Harry Falk finally read correctly for the first time most of the Kharoshthi legends, although he was unable to create a chronology for the coins.⁵ Finally, in a 2009 paper, I identified two more kings and proposed a relative and absolute chronology for the entire series.⁶

In this paper, I will summarise the results from my two earlier papers and that of Falk, presenting for the first time the entire sequence of coins in a unified catalogue. I will also present some new discoveries that help to tie up a few loose ends that had been left behind by the earlier research. One discovery relates to the tribal name and will be discussed in the next section, while the others are concerned with the sequence of the standing king types (Rapson’s fifth coin) and will be discussed in the context of the numismatic sequence. Finally, I will present some more detailed information on the coin sequences of individual kings, making significant progress towards a complete chronological picture for the coinage as a whole.

The name of the tribe

There has been some ambiguity on the name of the tribe that issued Rapson’s coins because the Indian literary sources sometimes name a tribe called the Pāratas and sometimes the Pāradas.⁷ These do seem to be alternative spellings of the same name (rather than different names) because the two different spellings have never been seen in the same list of tribes, and the tribe’s name (whether as the Pāratas or the Pāradas) appears along with the same group of other tribes, such as the Yavanas, the Pahlavas, the Kambojas, and so on. It has therefore seemed reasonable to suppose that these are indeed alternative spellings of the same name rather than the names of two different tribes.

Nevertheless, that has so far been a supposition, no matter how reasonable it might seem. On all published coins so far, the name of the tribe has been Pārata. However, I have now discovered a few coins, from very late in the series, where the tribal name has been

spelled Pārada. One such coin is shown in Figure 1. We see the legend on this coin, starting at about 2:30, and reading counter-clockwise:

Datayolasa Datarvha(rmaputrasa Pa)radaraja (terminal *sa* missing).

The letter *da* in the tribal name (at about 4 o’clock on the coin) can be compared with the same letter in the king’s name and in the patronymic, and the reading is clearly definitive. Chronologically, this coin could be among the last ones to be issued in the series, and so it is possible that the conventional spelling of the tribal name actually changed to Pārada, or this might simply represent a variant spelling contributed by the die cutter. In any case, since we also know of coins of Datayola II where the tribal name is spelled Pārata, any remaining doubts that these might not be alternative spellings for the name of the same tribe can now be dispelled forever.



Figure 1: Coin of Datayola II with tribal name Pārada

The location of the tribal lands

Vincent Smith⁸ had assigned this coinage to the Surat district, as he associated it with a Pārādā river mentioned in an inscription found in Nasik. Rapson, on the basis of the Jhelum district provenance of the British Museum’s coins, assumed the tribal lands must have been somewhere in that area, and this assumption was maintained by Mukherjee. However, it is now quite clear that the Pārata kingdom was in the north-eastern part of what is now the Pakistani state of Balochistan, perhaps extending into southern Afghanistan.

There are several pieces of evidence that support this assertion. Firstly, and most importantly, the coins appearing in the market these days with some frequency are said to be found primarily in the Loralai district of Balochistan. Secondly, buttressing this informal evidence is the fact that Sir Aurel Stein had discovered some pottery shards in that same area in 1926-27 and Sten Konow, in reading the inscriptions on these shards, had found they mentioned a king named Shahi Yolamira.⁹ Yolamira is also the name of the king whose coins are the earliest ones from the Pāratarāja series, thus confirming that the tribe did control the Loralai region in ancient times. Thirdly, this location is very consistent with a wide array of literary and inscriptional sources. Mukherjee had reviewed a large number of classical sources which mentioned this tribe. It was mentioned earliest by Herodotus, who located the tribe in the Medean region of northern Iran. Successive authors, such as Strabo, Isidore of Charax, and the author of the Periplus, located the tribe further and further east, suggesting an eastward migration, until finally Ptolemy, in his *Geography*, located them in the interior of Gedrosia (i.e., Balochistan) in the first century. The Indian sources always mention the Pāradas or Pāratas in conjunction with other western tribes such as the Yavanas, the Sakas and the Pahlavas, and it is quite clear the tribe was claimed to live west of the river Indus. Two Sasanian inscriptions mention the land of the Pāradas and associate it with Turan and Makuran, both of which were in Balochistan. And it is possible that references to the tribe are also found in some Chinese sources such as the *Hou Hanshu* and the writings of Xuandang. The location in north-eastern Balochistan and its immediate vicinity is consistent with all these sources.¹⁰ Thus it is veritably certain that this is the area where the Pāratas ruled and where they issued their coins.

The Numismatic Sequence

In this section, I will present all of the known coin types of the series in what I believe to be the most likely chronological order. In the discussion of each king's coinage, I will point out the reasons why I have chosen the particular order that I have. The coins are presented in a table illustrating each coin and providing other relevant details.

Yolamira

The first king in the numismatic sequence is named Yolamira, and his coins also name his father, Bagareva. We know Yolamira is the first king in the series because all other kings' coins can be placed in a logical sequence following him. The typical legend on Yolamira's coins reads:

Yolamirasa Bagarevapatrasa Pāratarājasa
(coin) of Yolamira, son of Bagareva, Pārata king.

Note the use of the genitive case, represented by the suffix *sa* on each word. The language of the legend is Prākṛit, and the script used is Brāhmī. Both the names contained in the legend are Iranian in origin. The name *Bagareva* means "rich god," while *Yolamira* means "warrior Mithra." Mithra was the Iranian solar deity, who may be familiar to readers from Kushan coins, where he is known as Miuro, Miro or Meiro.

It appears that Bagareva did not issue any coinage; we have not yet found any coins issued by him. Thus the series commences with Yolamira. Yolamira's coins can be divided into three groups, which are likely to have been issued at different points in time. The coins in the first group (coins 1-4 in the table) are united by the fact that the king depicted on the obverse is bearded. Coins 1 and 2, a drachm and hemi-drachm, were clearly carved by the same hand and at the same time; the style is very close, down to the retrograde letter *ja* in the reverse legend. Coins 3 and 4, both quarter drachms or trihemibols which share an obverse die, display a slightly different style but still depict a bearded king; thus I have chosen to include them in this group.

Group 2 (coins 5 and 6) clearly belong together. They exhibit the same style of bust, now clean-shaven, the same letter forms on the reverse legend, and swastikas that now turn to the left rather than to the right as did the swastikas on the coins of group 1. Similarly, the coins of group 3 (coins 7 and 8) also clearly belong together. Again, the style of bust is very similar, and quite distinct from the busts of groups 1 and 2, the swastikas now turn to the right again, and the letter forms are virtually identical. The entire legend is retrograde on these coins, further cementing the identity of the group.

Looking just at the busts on the coins, one would be tempted to place the coins of group 3 last in the sequence, as the clean-shaven busts of groups 1 and 2 make the king appear younger. However, it is clear that the portraits on the coins are not life-like, as they are so dissimilar as to appear to be portraits of different men. Further, the coins of group 3 must be the last ones in the sequence, as the obverse dies of the group 3 coins were re-used by the successor kings. Since the group 2 coins show a clean-shaven king, as do the group 3 coins, they seem to logically belong closer in time to group 3 than do the group 1 coins. I have, therefore, elected to place the group 1 coins first in the sequence.

There is a further reason for placing group 2 after group 1, having to do with coin 5A. This coin is my invention; no such coin has actually been found. But I assert that such a coin must have been issued. Although the standard denomination of the silver issues is the drachm, of approximately 3.65 gm, three subsequent kings (Hvaramira, Mirahvara and Kozana, coins 19, 27 and 40) issued double-weight didrachms. What is remarkable about these coins is that, although they are separated in time by about 30 to 40 years, *they all use the same obverse die*. What is even more remarkable is that the die they use must have been issued by Yolamira some 30 to 40 years earlier than Hvaramira. This is clear because the style of the didrachm die of the later kings matches the style of Yolamira's group 2 coins. Compare the obverses of coin 5A (where I have inserted the

obverse of coin 27, the didrachm of Mirahvara) and coin 5 of Yolamira. It would be obvious to any observer that these two dies have been carved by the same hand at the same time. Further, the style of the didrachm obverse die does not match any coin of Hvaramira, the first king for whom we have an actual didrachm. It is, therefore, quite clear that the first didrachms must have been issued by Yolamira. Coin 5A is an attempt to recreate what such a coin must have looked like. I have matched here the obverse of coin 27 and an enlarged reverse of coin 5. Since the style of the obverse die closely matches the style of the obverse of coin 5, it seems reasonable to suppose that the reverse of coin 5A would resemble the reverse of coin 5.

What does this have to do with the order of the groups? Clearly Yolamira's (anticipated) didrachm belongs with group 2. My first inclination was to treat this as evidence that group 2 must have been sequentially first, as it seemed logical that the "special issue" didrachm may have been issued at the time of the king's accession. However, in looking at the known didrachms of the three later kings and as I will show in detail later, I found that in no case was the didrachm issued as part of the first drachm issues. The didrachms were all issued as part of a second or later issue of each of the three kings. Thus it seemed reasonable to suppose that Yolamira's didrachms, and hence all his group 2 coins, were not part of a first issue. The group 1 coins were, therefore, logically first, followed by groups 2 and 3. This organization has the further virtue of placing contiguously the coins featuring the clean-shaven portrait.

Yolamira issued quarter drachms or trihemibols (coins 3 and 4) that are important for a couple of reasons. Coin 3 features a four-line legend rather than the circular legend we see on most coins. This gives us insight into the intended order of words in the legend. It is customary when presenting the coins of the Western Kshatrapas to place the patronymic portion of the legend prior to the king's own portion. Following this pattern, Yolamira's legend would read: *Bagarevapatrasa Pāratarājasa Yolamirasa*. However, the legend on the quarter dinar puts the king's name on the top line, and the legend reads: *Yolamirasa Bagarevapatrasa Pāratarājasa*. This, therefore, appears to be the intended order of words on the circular legends also.¹¹

Coin 4 has a shortened legend. Although the entire legend is not on the flan, it appears to read: *Yolamira Shahi*. This is an important corroboration of a piece of archaeological evidence on the Pāratas. As was mentioned earlier, some pottery shards naming *Shahi Yolamira* were found in the Loralai area by Sir Aurel Stein in 1926-27. This provides solid evidence supporting the informal reports that the coins naming Yolamira, including one giving him the title *Shahi*, that are said to come from the Loralai area, do in fact come from that region. And this is an important component of the argument that the Pārata kingdom was indeed in that region.

It is worth noting at this point that the metrology established by Yolamira was quite robust and lasted approximately 80 years. The detailed metrological analysis of the silver, Brāhmī legend coins was presented in my first paper.¹² The drachms in my sample weighed an average of approximately 3.65 gm, the hemi-drachms approximately 1.77 gm, and the quarter drachms 0.90 gm. Thus there seems to have been quite a tight metrology at the Pārata mint.

Bagamira

Yolamira was succeeded by his (presumably oldest) son, Bagamira. Bagamira's coins (see coin 9) are the rarest of any king in the Pārata series; he is known from only two coins, both struck from the same dies. The important point, though, is that the obverse die used on Bagamira's coins is the die Yolamira had used on coin 7.¹³ The legend on the coins reads:

Bagamirasa Yolamirapatrasa Pāratarājasa

Since Bagamira used only Yolamira's obverse die, it seems reasonable to suppose that he followed Yolamira. Another son of Yolamira, named Arjuna, also used the die from coin 7, but then also issued other drachms using freshly cut dies. Thus he must have come

later. Judging by the lack of new dies, and the paucity of his coinage, Bagamira must have had a very short reign.

In Bagamira's name, we see a pattern that continues throughout the dynasty: the names of the kings often use root words borrowed from previous kings' names. In Bagamira's case, both root words are borrowed: *Baga* (god) from his grandfather, Bagareva, and *Mira* (Mithra) from his father, Yolamira. The name *Bagamira* then simply means "Lord Mithra."

Arjuna

Bagamira was succeeded by his younger brother, Arjuna. We know from Arjuna's coin legends that he was another son of Yolamira; his legends read:

Arjunasa Yolamiraputrasa Pāratarājasa.

We can conclude that he followed Bagamira from the fact that he also re-used the Yolamira die from coin 7, but then also used freshly cut dies later in his reign. Thus it would not be logical for Bagamira to have come later.

Arjuna's name is very untypical of the Pārata series. It is one of only two (out of fifteen) names that is not Iranian but Indian. It seems reasonable to suppose that Arjuna's mother was Indian. This points to another plausible supposition: that the Pārata kings had multiple wives.

I have divided Arjuna's coins into three groups, although a further sub-division would be possible. The first group (coins 10 and 11) consists of drachms and hemi-drachms on which Arjuna has used his father's dies. The drachm (coin 10) uses Yolamira's die from coin 7 (also used by Bagamira on coin 9) and the hemi-drachm (coin 11) uses the Yolamira die from coin 8. Coins 10 and 11 also show a clear affinity on the reverses. The swastikas turn to the right and the letter forms are virtually identical. The reverse dies were clearly cut at the same time by the same hand. These coins must have been the earliest of Arjuna's reign, because they use Yolamira's dies.

Coins of group 2 (coins 12-15) must have been issued later in Arjuna's reign. These coins are united by the left-turning swastikas on the reverses. Coins 12 and 13 must have been the first issues from this group. Coin 12 is a new drachm die, similar in style to the Yolamira die used on coin 10. Coin 13 is a hemi-drachm, which still uses the Yolamira die used by Arjuna on his earlier issue (coin 11). But coin 13 must have been issued along with coin 12; they share the new leftward orientation of the swastika and also exhibit similar letter forms that are different from those used on the coins of group 1. Coin 14 must have come next; it is also a hemi-drachm that uses the same reverse die as coin 13 but a new obverse die. Coin 15 must have come even later. It is another hemi-drachm with new obverse and reverse dies. The reverse die still has the left-turning swastika and the letter forms have degraded somewhat. The letter *sa* is particularly unusual, but so are the *a* and *ja*.

Finally, coin 16 forms a separate "group" and was probably Arjuna's last issue. This is a drachm that re-uses the die from coin 12, but has a new reverse die on which the swastika turns to the right. The letter forms on this coin are very precise and clearly show no similarity to the letter forms of any other Arjuna coin.

Hvaramira

Arjuna was followed by Hvaramira, yet another son of Yolamira. His legends read:

Hvaramirasa Yolamiraputrasa Pāratarājasa.

The name *Hvaramira* again uses the root word *Mira* (for Mithra) but introduces the new root word *Hvara*, which refers to the glory of the sun. The word is no doubt related to the Iranian concept of *khvareno*, which Rosenfield describes as "a supernatural boon which may take the form of fire, a part of the all-illuminating heavenly light which is common to all divinities and which lights a great prince."¹⁴ In the Kushan pantheon, the personification of this *khvareno* was the deity *Pharro*. The name *Hvaramira* could be interpreted to mean "glorious Mithra."

We can infer that Hvaramira was the youngest of Yolamira's three known sons (or, at least, was the latest of the three to rule) by

the fact that he did not use any of Yolamira's dies, but did use Arjuna's last drachm die. Further, no coins are known for any sons of Bagamira or Arjuna, but two of Hvaramira's sons issued coins. Thus it appears that Hvaramira succeeded Arjuna and was then in turn succeeded by his son.

Hvaramira's coins can be divided into three groups. Except for the unique di-drachm (coin 19), all his known coins are drachms; no fractional coins are known. The drachms from group 1, coins 17 and 18, must have been early issues as they re-use the Arjuna die of coin 16. The first drachm from group 2, coin 20, shows a bust that is stylistically very similar to the Arjuna die of coin 16, notably in the use of horizontal stripes on the chest, but represents a new die. The letter forms on the reverse, however, are quite different. They are relatively crude. A particularly noticeable letter is *ta*, whose lower curved portion is almost reduced to a horizontal line. The same sorts of letter forms are also visible on the didrachm, coin 19, which is why it seems logical to group it with coin 20. The didrachm, as already discussed, uses an obverse die very similar in style and execution to Yolamira's drachm die from coin 5. I think we can be quite sure, therefore, that the di-drachm die of coin 20 was originally made for a Yolamira issue of which we have not yet found any examples. This must have been a special issue of some kind. My original impulse was to assume that this must have been a coronation issue, but it is quite clear that Hvaramira's didrachm was not issued at the time of the first drachm issues. Rather, it was issued later, in conjunction with the drachms like coin 20. The same pattern is visible in the cases of the two other known di-drachms in the series.¹⁵ It could be that the Pārata king was crowned only some time after coming to power, or it could be that these coins were victory issues of some kind. This could account for the fact that we do not have di-drachms for all of the kings; it is possible some of them never issued any, if the occasion for their issue did not arise in any given king's reign.

The last coin in group 2, coin 21, shows a reversion to more well-formed letters. I have chosen to list it after coins 19 and 20 because it seems to represent a new-style obverse. The final group consists of just coin 22, another new drachm die which clearly belongs last in Hvaramira's reign because the die was re-used by his son and successor, Mirahvara. Note that the letter forms on coin 22 are quite similar to those on coin 21, further buttressing the idea of placing the latter coin late in group 2. Both these coins spell the father's name as *Yodamira* rather than *Yolamira*. This was also true of coin 18, and may have been true on coins 19 and 20 as well. I have not seen an example of these types where the father's name is clearly legible.

Mirahvara

Hvaramira was succeeded by his son Mirahvara. We know this because we have drachms of Mirahvara (see coin 23) that use the die from Hvaramira's coin 22. They bear the legend:

Mirahvarasa Hvaramiraputrasa Pāratarājasa.

The name *Mirahvara* is made up of the same two root words as *Hvaramira*. Whether they have the same meaning is not exactly known; perhaps *Mirahvara* could be interpreted to mean "the glory of Mithra."

I have divided the coins of Mirahvara into three groups. The first group, consisting of coins 23-26, includes the drachms that use the Hvaramira die (coins 23 and 26), and hemi-drachms and quarter drachms (or trihemibols) that use dies of Yolamira and Arjuna! The hemidrachms (coin 24) use the hemidrachm die of Yolamira's coin 8, which was also then used by Arjuna (coins 11 and 13); we do not have any hemi-drachms of Hvaramira. The quarter drachms¹⁶ (coin 25) use the hemi-drachm die of Arjuna's coin 14. Again, we have no quarter drachms of Hvaramira. Thus it appears that Mirahvara reintroduced the fractional coinage that had lapsed during the reign of Hvaramira. The coins of this group are united by the letter forms of the reverse legends. They all have a complex form of the letter *ha* and an acutely angled lower stroke on the letter *sa*. They come early in the reign because of the drachm die identity with the coin of

Hvaramira. I have listed coin 26 last because of the left-turning swastika. It seems likely that that reverse die was manufactured after the very first issues 23-25, which featured the right-turning swastika.

Group 2 of Mirahvara's coinage contains the di-drachm (coin 27), a drachm with an entirely new die (coin 28) and hemi-drachms (coins 29 and 30) that continue using the obverse die used by Yolamira and Arjuna and then by Mirahvara on coin 24. These coins are all united by the letter forms, which are very smooth and stylish. The form of *ha* has reverted to its original simple shape and the lower stroke on *sa* has once again become a smooth curve. The didrachm, of course, uses the didrachm die used by Hvaramira on coin 19. The reverse swastika turns left as on coin 26; however, the letter forms separate the didrachm from this coin and connect it to coins 28-30. Thus clearly the didrachm was once again struck in a later emission rather than in Mirahvara's inaugural issue.

The late-reign issues of group 3 consist of a drachm (coin 31) and a hemidrachm. The drachm uses the same die as coin 28, which was a freshly cut die for Mirahvara. The reason we can be sure this coin is late is that the die by this time had developed a prominent crack running almost vertically down the middle of the coin. The coin can be paired with the hemi-drachm because of the distinctive letter forms. The hemi-drachm (coin 32) uses the same die as all of Mirahvara's earlier hemi-drachms, the die he had inherited from Yolamira and Arjuna.

Miratakhma

Miratakhma was Mirahvara's (presumably younger) brother and he succeeded him. Again, we know this from the die match of Miratakhma's first issue, coin 33, which used the cracked Mirahvara die of coin 31. The legend on the coin reads:

Miratakhmasya Hvaramiraputrasa Pāratārājasa.

The name *Miratakhma* uses the familiar root word *Mira*, along with a new root word *takhma*, which means "strong, heroic." Thus, *Miratakhma* would mean "heroic Mithra."

Miratakhma's coins are quite rare, although he introduced at least two other drachm dies that we know of. The first, seen on coin 34, is quite different stylistically from all previous coins, particularly in the treatment of the hair, which is depicted as long and flowing. The second die, seen on coins 35 and 36, is radically new. It turns the bust to the left in contrast to all previous Pārata coins where the bust faced right. Further, the new die shows the king wearing a peaked tiara along with his diadem; all previous coins showed a bare-headed, diademed king. Thus this type introduces two new features to the obverse design, features which are continued in the subsequent coinage. Coin 35 introduces a radical new feature on the reverse as well: the legend is in Sanskrit as opposed to Prakrit, as the legend reads:

Miratakhmasya Hvaramiraputrasya Pārata (sic! *rājasya* missing).

This feature was not repeated on any subsequent coins.

As far as the ordering of the later issues of Miratakhma is concerned, I had no strong reason to place coin 34 earlier or later than coins 35 and 36, since both types are echoed in later coinage. I elected to place coins 35 and 36 last because their innovation persisted in the coinage of a number of subsequent kings.

With Miratakhma, the well-defined tree of Pārata kings, with brothers and sons following older brothers and fathers, ends. No coins are known of any kings who announce their fathers to be Miratakhma or Mirahvara. Thus the construction of the family tree of kings, and their order of succession, is a little more speculative. Nevertheless, I suspect strong arguments can be made to support the construction laid out in the following sections.

Kozana

Kozana (whose name had previously been read as Spajhana by Senior in his catalogue of Indo-Scythian coins) marks several transitions in the coinage of the Pāratārājas. He is the last king to issue any coins with Brāhmī legends, switching then to Kharoshthi. He is also the

last king to issue coins with an appreciable silver content. He undertakes the first serious reform of the weight-standard maintained by all the previous kings. Finally, he solidifies the transition to coins depicting the king as crowned rather than bare-headed. Thus the coinage underwent a considerable transformation with Kozana and this suggests that the time may have been marked by considerable change in the overall environment as well.

The fact that Kozana's coinage has so many transitional characteristics makes it quite clear that his coinage follows that of Miratakhma, even though no direct familial link is available. The legend on Kozana's coins reads:

Kozanasa Bagavharnaputrasa Pāratārājasa.

His father, Bagavharna, is unknown from any previous coinage. However, the name seems very consistent with the patterns established by the previous six kings. It contains two root words: *Baga*, or god, which we had seen in the names *Bagareva* and *Bagamira*, and *vharna*, which may be related to the root word *hvarya*, seen in the names *Hvaramira* and *Mirahvara*. *Bagavharna* could be taken to mean "the glory of god." Judging by the name, I believe it is quite possible that Bagavharna was Bagamira's son and therefore cousin to Mirahvara and Miratakhma. We do not know the meaning of the name *Kozana*, although Falk has suggested that it might be related to the name *Kujula* known from the Kushan series.

Kozana's first coin (coin 37) is a silver hemi-drachm with a Brāhmī legend. Presumably a drachm must have also been issued, although the issue was rather small, judging by the scarcity of the coins; there is only one example known of this type. This was the last Brāhmī legend coin in the Pāratārāja series. The bust on this coin was the conventional bare-headed, diademed bust facing right.

The second group of coins (coins 38 and 39) are the first coins to feature a legend in Kharoshthi. The coins follow the conventional weight standard, with the drachm weighing a notional 3.65 gm, and the hemi-drachm approximately 1.82 gm. However, the coins are very different stylistically, and this suggests they may not have been issued at the same time. The drachm (coin 38) features a diademed, bare-headed bust right in a style reminiscent of Miratakhma's unusual die of coin 34. The hemi-drachm (coin 39), on the other hand, features a crowned bust left, similar in design to Miratakhma's coins 35 and 36. It is conceivable that coin 39 actually belongs to the subsequent series which was on a reduced weight standard, but the celator mistakenly used an old blank belonging to the conventional weight standard.

The third and final group of Kozana's coinage (coins 40-42) is on a reduced weight standard. The first coin in the group is a didrachm that uses the same die as the didrachms of Hvaramira (coin 19) and Mirahvara (coin 27), although Kozana's didrachm weighs 5.05 gm, as opposed to 7.53 gm and 6.76 gm. for the previous two didrachms. Thus Kozana's didrachm clearly belongs to a reduced weight standard, where the notional weight of a drachm might be around 2.50 gm. Most known drachms, however, weigh less than this. Coin 41 weighs 2.23 gm, and the hemi-drachm (coin 42) weighs 1.04 gm. Thus, it is slightly unclear what exactly the new weight standard was, but it is clear that there was a new, reduced weight standard.

The other feature of the new series worth noting is that the obverse features a diademed bust left crowned with a peaked tiara, following the last coin type of Miratakhma. This style of bust persists through the next couple of reigns.

Bhimarjuna

Although we know of coins of Kozana's son, Koziya, I believe Kozana was not succeeded by his son, but by a king named Bhimarjuna, son of Yolatakhma. The legend on his coins reads:

Bhimarjunasa Yolatakmaputrasa Pāratārājasa

We have no prior knowledge of either of these names, so the relationship of Bhimarjuna to the other Pārata kings is speculative. Nevertheless, it seems very reasonable to suppose that Bhimarjuna was a direct descendant of Arjuna. His name includes the name

Arjuna combined with the name of Bhima, another heroic Pandava brother from the *Mahābhārata*. Since no coins of any son of Arjuna were known, it is quite possible that Yolatakma was Arjuna's son.. This would be quite logical in that the name *Yolatakma* is made up of the root words *Yola*, meaning "war" and present in the name of Arjuna's father, Yolamira, and *takhma*, meaning "heroic" and present in the name of Arjuna's nephew Miratakma.

If my theories are correct, the narrative of regal succession in the Pātarāja dynasty could indicate an extended family environment in which cousins would be treated as brothers. Yolamira had three sons, Bagamira, Arjuna, and Hvaramira, who ruled in that order. Bagamira and Arjuna may have died relatively young either through disease, war, or family intrigue. Neither of their sons are known to have issued coins, as Hvaramira was followed in turn by two of his sons, Mirahvara and Miratakma. But Miratakma was followed by Kozana, who may well have been Bagamira's grandson. And he, in turn, was followed by Bhimarjuna, who may well have been Arjuna's grandson. Only after Bhimarjuna's presumed death did Kozana's son, Koziya, come to the throne.

Why do I believe Kozana was succeeded not by his son but by Bhimarjuna? There are three reasons:

1. Kozana's coins were all in silver, while Koziya's coins are all in copper. Bhimarjuna's coins seem to have a range. There are a few coins that are silvery in appearance, some that are a very clear billon, while others that are largely copper. Thus the transition from silver to copper seems to have taken place during Bhimarjuna's reign, suggesting that it occurred in between the reigns of Kozana and Koziya.
2. The style of Bhimarjuna's coins seems to be quite close to that of Kozana's, while Koziya's seems more distinct. Specifically, the size of the head on Kozana's coins is relatively small, while it is quite large on Koziya's coins. The size of the head on Bhimarjuna's coins is relatively small.
3. The weight of Kozana's low-weight-standard drachms is approximately 2.25 gm. My sample of 35 drachms of Bhimarjuna had an average weight of 1.95 gm, while my sample of 91 drachms of Koziya had an average weight of 1.66 gm. It seems, therefore, that a steady devaluation of the currency was taking place in this period, first in the transition from silver to copper and then in the weight reduction of the copper drachms.

Bhimarjuna's coins, being largely of copper, are difficult subjects for die analysis because the coins are generally not in very good condition. I have presented five coins, each featuring a different obverse (and reverse) die. There were probably other obverse dies, but they have proved difficult to identify clearly. The first coin (coin 42) is a very clear billon and shares the obverse die with at least one silvery-looking coin I have seen; thus this must have been relatively early. Coin 43, with the "chubby-cheeked" die, also appears to be a billon coin. The subsequent coins all appear to be copper coins. They are arranged in order of declining weight. The last coin, which features very distinctive letter forms on the reverse legend, appears to be very close to Koziya's first coin (coin 47). This may well have been Bhimarjuna's last issue.

Koziya

Bhimarjuna was succeeded by Kozana's son, Koziya. Koziya's coinage is the most copious of all the Pātarāja coinage. Not only is the number of coins the greatest, but so also is the number of coin types. The table lists 17 coin types for Koziya (coins 47-63), consisting of three denominations, drachm (coins 47-55 and 57-59), hemi-drachm (coin 56) and di-drachm (coins 60-63), and from three broad periods in his reign. The standard legend, in Kharoshthi, is:

Koziyasa Kozanaputrasa Pātarājasa.

The coins in the first group, coins 47-52, which I believe to be the earliest of the series, are united by their depiction of the king as clean-shaven. To my eye, the face also looks fairly young. The first

coin, coin 47, is very similar in style and letter forms to the last Bhimarjuna issue (coin 46) and is almost certainly Koziya's first issue. Note that the head on this coin is relatively small and the shoulders are seen clearly in a roughly proportional size. Thus, this coin conforms in style to the coins of Bhimarjuna; indeed, I suspect that the die of coin 47 may well be a Bhimarjuna die, although I have not been able to find a definitive die match. The dies of coins 46 and 47 are very close, but the condition of the coins prevents a clear determination of whether they form a die match. The letter forms on the two coins are also very similar, and seem to be the work of the same hand.

Coin 48 is similar in style to coin 47, although the head is larger and the shoulders are no longer visible on the coin. But the king is still shown bare-headed, diademed, and wearing a simple peaked crown. Subsequent coins, numbers 49-51, add an ear flap, perhaps attempting to convert the crown to a helmet, even though the peaked front is still present. It is not clear what the order of these three types should be; I have placed them in the order of how young the portraits looked to me, an admittedly subjective and imperfect method of ordering them. Finally, coin 52 introduces a new image in which the ear flap has disappeared and the ear is now covered by the king's hair, represented in neat horizontal rows. Note that on this coin the king's shoulders have reappeared. This coin belongs last in this group because it is related to subsequent issues.

The second group of coins (coins 53 and 54) continue to depict the king as diademed and crowned, with the hair arranged in rows, but now show him sporting a moustache. Coin 53 is possibly a didrachm, as it weighs 2.62 gm, in contrast to the average weight of 1.66 gm for Koziya's drachms. Another possibility is that the coin was struck on an old blank or on another coin. Militating against this explanation is the fact that the shoulders are visible on this coin, while they are not on the next coin. Coin 54 is certainly a drachm of this type.

Some time during the first or second phases of Koziya's coinage, a new type was introduced: a standing king type of double weight, i.e., a di-drachm. Coin 60 is an example of this type. I have never seen a specimen of this type that is detailed enough to see whether the king's face bears a moustache or not, nor exactly what the treatment of the hair is, so I have been unable to determine exactly when, during the drachm sequence, this di-drachm was introduced. What is visible is the peaked crown, indicating that this type was introduced some time during these first two phases when the drachms show the king wearing a peaked crown. My suspicion, based on what I can see of the king's image, is that the type was introduced fairly early, perhaps even contemporaneously with coin 48.

Coin 60 not only introduced an interesting new type and denomination, it also served as the "Rosetta stone" to help Harry Falk finally read the Kharoshthi legends correctly. That was because the coin features not just the Kharoshthi legend on the reverse, but also a short Brāhmī legend on the obverse: the name of the king, Koziya. The first letter *ko* allowed a re-reading of the first letter of the name in Kharoshthi, which had been read as *śpa* since the letter looked exactly like the letter *śpa* on the coins of the Indo-Scythian king Śpalarises.¹⁷ And the second letter of the Brāhmī legend revealed the correct reading of the second letter of the Kharoshthi legend, the Kharoshthi *jha*. In Brāhmī, the name was spelled *Koysiya*, and it became clear that the compound letter *ysa* represented the sound *za* since Brāhmī does not have a letter for the non-Indian sound *z*.¹⁸ Thus the letter *jha* in the Kharoshthi legend was not meant to be read literally, but rather it also represented the sound *za* for which Kharoshthi had no symbol.¹⁹

In the third phase of Koziya's coinage, the king is no longer shown wearing a peaked crown but a turban.²⁰ Further, the head on the drachms (coins 55-59) faces right rather than left. The face looks older. Since this fits the chronological sequence and the portraits do look like they could be of the same person, one wonders if the portraits of Koziya might be fairly realistic. In any event, the late "turbaned" series features several types. In coin 55, the king is shown

wearing a large diamond-shaped ear-ring. Coin 56 is the only known hemi-drachm of the copper series. Coin 57 has a more ornate turban and a large round ear-ring. Coins 58 and 59 feature a new element in front of the king's face; it appears to be a sceptre. Coin 59 features another variation: the swastika on the reverse turns to the left instead of the right.

Coins 61-63 are the standing king types that belong to this third phase. The fact that there are three coins in this group as opposed to only one (coin 60) in the first and second phases does not mean that the third phase standing king types are more common. On the contrary, they are much rarer. There are far more examples of the coin 60 type, but they differ in only marginal ways from one another. Coins 61-63 seem to have quite distinctive features. Coin 61 is similar to coin 60 except the king now wears a turban. Coin 62 has the king turned to the left as opposed to the right. On this coin, the king holds in his right hand a sceptre similar to the one in the right field of coin 58, while his left hand rests on the hilt of his sword. Also, the obverse legend naming the king has moved to the right field as opposed to the left field on coin 61, and is now in Kharoshthi as opposed to Brāhmī. Further, while the Brāhmī legend on the obverse of coins 60 and 61 was in the nominative case: *Koziya*, the Kharoshthi legend on coin 62 is in the genitive case: *Koziyasa*. Coin 63 follows 62, although the sceptre is thicker, more like the one on coin 59. Further, on this coin the reverse swastika turns left as on coin 59. Thus coins 59 and 63 were probably issued in roughly the same time frame or perhaps even contemporaneously. They appear to be the last issues of Koziya.

Datarvharna

No coins are known of any son of Koziya or of Bhimarjuna. There are coins of the standing king type known for two other rulers. The first of these is named Datarvharna, son of Datayola; the second is Datayola, son of Datarvharna. The question arises: which of these coins comes first? Falk had assumed Datarvharna came first, as he did not know the name of the second king, only that he was a son of Datarvharna, and I had carried on with this assumption in my 2009 paper. But now that we know that the name of the second king is Datayola, there exists the possibility that he came first. In order to explain the two sets of coins, one of Datarvharna, son of Datayola, and the other of Datayola, son of Datarvharna, we could just as easily have the sequence:

Datarvharna → Datayola → Datarvharna

with the first Datarvharna known only from Datayola's coin legends, as the sequence

Datayola → Datarvharna → Datayola

with the first Datayola known only from his son's coins.

Thus the order of these two kings needs to be carefully considered. After doing so, I have come to the strong conclusion that Datarvharna comes first and Datayola second, in line with Falk's assumption and my earlier treatment. Thus, there must have been another Datayola (Datarvharna's father) who did not issue coins as far as we know. I will outline my argument after presenting both sets of coins.

Datarvharna basically issued one standing king type that closely follows the late type of Koziya's coin 62. The king is shown standing facing, turned slightly to the left, wearing a turban, holding a sceptre in his (proper) right hand and the hilt of his sword with the left. There is a Kharoshthi legend in the right field naming the king in the genitive case: *Datarvharnasa*. All the coins I have seen seem to use the same obverse die, as on coins 64-66, although it is difficult to be certain about this because of the condition of the coins. The reverses vary, however. Coin 64 shows a reverse with the standard legend in well-formed letters. Coin 65 has unusual letters that are much cruder in execution, while coin 66 has a variant legend where Falk had read the title *Rajño*. I have not seen a coin with a fully legible legend for this type, but it seems that the reconstructed legend would probably be:

Rajño Datarvharnasa Datayolaputrasa Pātarāja.

This seems unusual as a legend and one wonders if the "title" *Rajño* is really a mistake for *rāja* at the end of *Pātarāja*.

The name *Datarvharna* is once again made up of two root words, one of which we have seen before in the names of previous kings. The root *vharna* represents divine glory. There is some ambiguity about the meaning of the root word *Datar*. Falk reasons that it must mean "creator," making the name *Datarvharna* mean "the glory of the creator," but reports that Nicholas Sims-Williams has expressed some reservations about this interpretation.²¹

We do not have a direct genealogical connection between Datarvharna and the previous kings of the series. However, his name does contain a root word (*vharna*) we have seen before, as does his father's name (*yola*). Further, Datarvharna's coin type closely follows the late type of his predecessor, Koziya. Therefore, it seems plausible that he belonged to the same family and that the succession was an orderly one. If he did indeed belong to the same family line, I would suggest that he may well have been the grandson of Bhimarjuna; in other words, that his father Datayola was Bhimarjuna's son. There are two reasons why I think this is plausible. Firstly, the root name *yola* seems important in this line, as it is in the names of both Datarvharna's father and of his son. The same root word is also present in the name of Bhimarjuna's father, Yolatakma (and in the name of his grandfather, Yolamira). Secondly, placing Datarvharna in Bhimarjuna's line in this way allows him to belong to the generation just after Koziya's and, therefore, renders him a plausible successor to Koziya. If he were in Koziya's line, he would have to be his grandson. The root word *yola* seems not to be as important in Koziya's line (although the patriarch of the dynasty was named Yolamira and so the root *yola* would be plausible anywhere in the family). Further, if he succeeded Koziya but belonged to a generation two levels after Koziya, one would expect his reign to be relatively long. However, the paucity of dies in the Datarvharna coinage (possibly as low as one) suggests a short reign. Therefore, it seems more plausible to fit him in Bhimarjuna's line. Of course all this is speculative. Datarvharna may not have belonged to the old royal family at all, or, even if he did, could have descended from someone totally different.

Datayola II

The last king in the series was named Datayola, who was the son of Datarvharna. I have called him Datayola II in order to distinguish him from Datarvharna's father. The legend on his coins reads:

Datayolasa Datarvharnaputrasa Pātarājasa

although there are a few coins, such as coin 71 (also seen in Figure 1), where the tribal name is spelled *Pārada*. Falk has suggested that the name *Datayola* means "fighter for the law."

The coinage of Datayola II follows closely that of Datarvharna. The main type (coins 67-72) shows on the obverse a standing king facing, turned to the left, holding a sceptre and sword hilt, with the king's name in Kharoshthi in the right field. The reverse shows the usual swastika surrounded by the circular Kharoshthi legend, although the swastika here sometimes turns to the right and sometimes to the left. (The swastika on all known coins of Datarvharna turns to the right.) Thus, the two series are very closely compatible.

One notable feature of Datayola's coins is that there are several known examples of coins that are overstruck on coins of the Kushano-Sasanian king, Hormizd I (see coins 69 and 72, and probably 71 also). The undertypes on these coins are examples of Hormizd's larger copper coins, Cribb types 34-35.²² These overstrikes are very important in helping pin down the dates for the *Pātarāja* series.

Apart from the standing king types, which are di-drachms, Datayola also issued a bust type in an entirely new denomination: a tetradrachm (coin 73). Further, there is one known copper drachm (coin 74) featuring a turbaned king, but too crude in its execution to fit into Koziya's issues. The legend on the coin is not legible. I

suspect, judging from the crude execution, that this is also a coin of Datayola II, although Datavharna cannot be ruled out. The fact that Datayola also experimented with a tetradrachm seems to support the idea that he might have experimented with a drachm denomination as well. These seem to be the last coins in the main Pāratārāja series, except possibly for the much later type represented by coin 75.

Unknown king

Coin 75 is an example of one other coin type that sometimes appears with other Pāratārāja coins and features the reverse swastika typical of the coins of this series. This would lead one to believe that this is indeed a Pāratārāja coin, perhaps following the coins of Datayola II. However, I believe this coin was issued much later than the coins discussed so far and may not even be a Pāratārāja coin at all, although it quite possibly is. There are several reasons for this. The style of the coin is quite different from other known coins of the series, and the legend appears to be in Brāhmī, marking a departure from the other copper coins of the series. The legend is still unread and on no coin that I have seen can the tribal name be asserted to be present. The weight matches the didrachms of the series, but this coin features a bust right on the obverse, rather than the standing king present on all known didrachms from the rest of the series. Finally, the crown worn by the king on this coin has a notable feature: a lunar crescent, possibly topped by a solar disc. This is a crown feature first introduced by the Sasanian king, Yazdegard I (399-420), which was then copied widely on the coins of the Kushano-Sasanians and the Hephthalites. Coin 75 is, therefore, likely to be from the fifth century, more than 100 years after Datayola II, since the latter can be quite conclusively dated to c. 280-300 on account of his overstrikes on the coins of Hormizd I. This would explain why the coin does not appear to be a close evolution of Datayola's coins and why it might not even be a Pāratārāja coin, but a coin of some successor dynasty.

Dating of the Series

I have proposed the following chronology for the Pāratārāja series:

Yolamira,	c. 125-150
Bagamira,	c. 150
Arjuna,	c. 150-165
Hvaramira,	c. 165-175
Mirahvara,	c. 175-185
Miratakhma,	c. 185-200
Kozana,	c. 200-220
Bhimarjuna,	c. 220-230
Koziya,	c. 230-270
Datavharna,	c. 270-280
Datayola II,	c. 280-300

I have discussed elsewhere²³ arguments for dating the series to c. 125-300 of the common era. All the evidence that I could come up with is consistent with these dates, and there are strong reasons to actually use these as the approximate dates. The basic argument goes as follows:

1. Overall, the eleven Pārata kings who issued coins appear to belong to seven generations. Bagamira, Arjuna and Hvaramira belong to one generation as they are all brothers. That reduces the number of generations by two from the number of kings. Mirahvara and Miratakhma are also brothers; that cuts another generation out. Finally, Bhimarjuna ruled between father and son, Kozana and Koziya, and must have belonged to one of their generations (I have argued he was probably Kozana's cousin); that is a fourth generation cut from the original eleven kings. Thus we are down to seven generations. In a detailed analysis of a large number of ancient dynasties,²⁴ I showed that an average generational length at that time was around 25 years. This suggests that the eleven kings, belonging to seven generations, should fit into a time period approximately 175 years in length.
2. Since Datayola II, the last king in the series, overstruck coins of Hormizd I (270-290), it seems that a date shortly after the dates

of Hormizd would be suitable for Datayola. The dates of c. 280-300 fit that profile.

3. If the series ends in c. 300, the 175 year span would suggest a start date of c. 125. Since Yolamira uses the term *Shahi* on the pottery shards analyzed by Sten Konow,²⁵ a date for that king around the time of Kanishka I, or shortly thereafter, seems reasonable, since it was Kanishka who revived use of that title. Hence the start of Yolamira's reign to c. AD 125 seems reasonable.
4. The use of patronymics on the Pāratārāja coinage was probably influenced by the similar usage on the coins of the Western Kshatrapas. The first ruler of that dynasty to use a patronymic was Chastana, who is dated to c. AD 75. So the dates I am proposing for the Pāratārājas are consistent with this.
5. Most Western Kshatrappa coins show only the ruler's head, but there are certain rare coins of Rudradāman (ruled 130-150) that show the shoulders in a manner very similar to the treatment on the Pāratārāja coins. This suggests a rough contemporaneity between Yolamira and Rudradāman.
6. The weight of the Pāratārāja silver drachm before Kozana's monetary reform was approximately 3.65 gm. This agrees very well with the weight of the Parthian drachm during the second century.
7. The standing king type introduced by Koziya featured the king wearing a knee length tunic with a gracefully curved hemline. This style of tunic was featured on Kushan coins for the first time by Kanishka II (the coinage of his predecessor, Vasudeva I, always featured a straight hemline), who ruled c. 227-247. These dates agree very well with my proposed dates of 230-270 for Koziya.
8. There are several paleographic features on the Pāratārāja coin legends that agree with the dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

For all these reasons, the dating of the dynasty to c. 125-300 seems very reasonable.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have synthesized some of my earlier work and that of Harry Falk on the Pāratārāja coinage, providing for the first time a complete dynastic chronology for these coins. I have also, for the first time, provided a detailed sequential analysis for the coinage of each of the eleven kings, thereby creating a detailed chronology of the numismatic sequence. At this point, the task of analyzing and ordering this coinage is substantially complete.

We are, therefore, now in a position to answer the questions posed by Rapson in his JRAS paper back in 1905. The coins with "reverse type svastika" that he considered were all coins belonging to the Pāratārāja series, issued by the kings of that dynasty in what is now northeastern Balochistan during the second and third centuries. His coins were numbered 4-8. Coin 4 is a silver hemidrachm of Yolamira, similar to coin 2 in the table.²⁶ His coin 5 is almost certainly a silver drachm of Mirahvara, similar to coin 23 in the table below, with which it shares an obverse die.²⁷ Rapson's coin 6 is a reduced-weight silver drachm of Kozana, similar to our coin 41, and his coin 7 is a full-weight (*i.e.*, pre-reform) silver hemidrachm of the same ruler, similar to our coin 39.²⁸ Finally, his coin 8 is a standing king type of Koziya similar to coin 60 in the table below. Thus can Rapson's century-old mystery be finally laid to rest.

Notes and References

1 I have had helpful discussions about the Pāratārājas with several people over the years; I would particularly like to thank Shailen Bhandare, Joe Cribb, Harry Falk, Tom Mallon, Bob Senior and Nicholas Sims-Williams. I am also grateful to Hans Loeschner, Anne van't Haaft and Wilfried Pieper for sharing coin images with me and granting me permission to publish some of them.

2 E.J. Rapson: "Notes on Indian Coins and Seals," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1905, pp. 789-792.

3 B.N. Mukherjee: *The Pāradas: A Study in their Coinage and History*,

Coin 70 (649.34) Copper didrachm



Obv: Standing king Left, legend R: *Datayola*, (same die as 69)
Rev: Swastika Left, legend around @1h: *Datayolasa Datarvharna-putrasa Pāratarāja*
3.40 g, 17 mm

Coin 71 (653.62) Copper didrachm



Obv: Standing king Left
Rev: Swastika left, legend around @3h: *Datayolasa Datarvharna-putrasa Pāradarāja*
4.11 g, 16-18 mm
Possible overstrike on ?

Coin 72 Loeschner Copper didrachm



Obv: Standing king Left
Rev: Swastika left, legend around @1h: *Datayolasa Datarvharna-putrasa Pāradarāja*
Overstrike on coin of Hormizd I

Coin 73 Copper tetradrachm



Obv: Diademed bust left, holding flower
Rev: Swastika right, legend around @1h: *Datayo(lasa Datarvharna-putrasa Pārata)rāja*
7.72 g, 21 mm

Coin 74 (151.01) Copper drachm



Obv: Turbaned bust Left
Rev: Swastika right, legend around: ??
2.10 g, 15 mm

Unknown king (c. 5th century)

Coin 75 (653.32) Copper didrachm



Obv: Crowned bust Right
Rev: Swastika right, legend around: ??
3.18 g, 18 mm

SAMUDRAGUPTA'S KING-AND-QUEEN TYPE COINS IN THE PATTERNING OF EARLY GUPTA COIN DESIGNS

Ellen M. Raven, Leiden University

Man is equipped by nature to spot differences, obvious differences and not so obvious ones. But we also excel at seeing differences differently. In his captivating 'A short history of nearly everything', Bill Bryson describes how this obstacle has played havoc in taxonomic studies of organisms, 'described sometimes as a science and sometimes as an art, but really it's a battleground.' The field of Gupta numismatics luckily never took on the guise of an academic battle-field simply because Gupta coins specialists are few and far between. But small battles do happen, behind the closed doors of the study, and the moves in these battles filter through to the outside world by means of catalogues. In taxonomy, 'even today there is more disorder in the system than most people realize' (Bryson 2003:437), and for Gupta coin studies, this fits like a glove. The reason for the disorder in taxonomy is the way taxonomists make divisions. Bryson sees two kinds of taxonomists: 'lumpers' and 'splitters'. Gupta coin studies have indeed been inhabited by 'lumpers' and 'splitters' from the early days onwards.

Classifications

While scouting the Gupta numismatic landscape, 19th century students of Gupta coins such as James Prinsep, Edward Thomas and Vincent Smith, were prone to be splitters rather than lumpers. In the early decades of the 20th century, John Allan at the British Museum mostly focused on differences in the legends to improve the classification of Gupta gold coins on the basis laid by his 19th century predecessors. He was fairly restrained while creating divisions, thus unknowingly siding with the 'lumpers'.

Forty years later, Anant Sadashiv Altekar took Gupta coin classification into the splitter's realm with an exceptionally detailed system which might involve differences in the legends (as with Allan's system). If this did not work, Altekar would choose the presence or absence of a crescent symbol, the presence or absence of the Garuda-banner, a large or a small size, an exceptionally heavy weight, the weapons carried by the king or the absence thereof, the presence or absence of a dagger, a whip or a sword on the king's waist, the placement of the legend in a curved or a straight line, the support of the goddess (a pedestal or a mat), the attributes in her hands, the direction of a lion seat (to left or right), the direction of a horse (to left or right), the trappings of the Aśvamedha horse, or the absence thereof. A staggeringly diverse series of criteria indeed, which resulted in an amazing 'splitter's battlefield' along widely different dividing lines.

In 1946, no less than 1,821 coins of the Bayana hoard were placed at the disposal of Altekar and his local team of archaeologists and teachers at Bharatpur, which included the young assistant Parmeshwari Lal Gupta. The Maharaja of Bharatpur was pressing

Altekar to get a catalogue out speedily. If we keep in mind the amount of work that had to be done, it is hard to imagine that Altekar could study the Bayana coins during only three visits to Bharatpur. Quite unfortunately, only the 'important' coins were photographed for the book. Well before the catalogue was out, the Bayana coins had been dispersed to various museums in India, many without ever having been photographed and thus rapidly losing their immaculate Bayana hoard contextual identity.

The classification system used by Altekar in the Bayana hoard catalogue had just been designed by him for a new handbook on Gupta coins ready to go to press when the hoard was found in 1946. In neither of the two major works out by 1957 did Altekar discuss the nature of his criteria or the extent to which these might help to understand the rationale behind the staggering diversity of these coins. Nevertheless, his *Coinage of the Gupta empire* remains the standard reference work to this day.

The next major attempt to brave Gupta coin diversity was done in the early 1980s, when P.L. Gupta quite explicitly rejected Allan's and Altekar's systems and applied his own classification in a coin catalogue for the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Varanasi. He took the splitter's stand, as I shall illustrate by means of the King-and-Queen Type coins of Samudragupta. I will subsequently introduce a new approach, which on the face of it looks like 'splitting', but turns out to be 'lumping' in the end.

The King-and-Queen Type

The King and Queen coins carry the royal couple, Candragupta I and his Queen Kumāradevī, on the obverse and a goddess seated on a lion on the reverse. These coins have been discussed many times for mostly two issues: Who ordered their manufacture? The king shown on the coins or his son, Samudragupta? And what is the message carried by the devices? Rather than re-address these issues, I will focus on the designs instead.¹



Fig 1: Gupta and S. Srivastava (=G&S) 1981, Class I, lion couchant to right on reverse; Var. Ia: legend caṇdragupta_kumāradevī [ER-ḥ]. Coll. N. Mahajan, 7.80 g (120.4 grains) (photographs courtesy Nupam Mahajan)



Fig.2 G&S 1981, Class I, lion couchant to right on reverse; Var. Ib: obverse legend caṇdragupta_kumāradevī [ER-ḥ]. Coin in Hoey's coll. as published by Allan 1914:9, fig. 3.5.



Fig.3 G&S 1981, Class I, lion couchant to right on reverse; Var. Ic: obverse legend caṇdragupta_kumāradevī-śrī/śrīḥ. BM, London, cat. no. 28 (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 3.20)

Neither Allan nor Altekar – surprisingly really – devised classes or

varieties for this coin type. P.L. Gupta and Sarojini Srivastava's 1981 system did acknowledge their diversity, although Altekar might have frowned a bit on their choice to create classes (no less) on the basis of such a relatively minor element as the direction of the lion mount on the reverse. It is shown either reclining to the right (figs 1-3) or to the left (figs 4-6). Gupta and Srivastava chose small differences in the name of Kumāradevī on the obverse (*viz.*, the absence or presence of the honorific śrī) as their criterion to distinguish varieties. A similar approach led them to find two varieties among coins of Class II (figs 4-5). Strangely enough, Gupta and Srivastava were not alerted by the fact that the varieties of either class revealed parallel differences in their legends. Their main criterion, the lion's position, has now proven to be false. Two King-and-Queen coins, one from the British Museum (no. 23) and another from Baldwin's Sale no. 9 (13 January 2005, lot no. 284), show that the coins of Gupta & Srivastava's Classes Ia and IIa share a die-linked obverse and are thus too close to warrant their being in separate classes. Similarly, their Varieties Ib and IIb include die-linked coins.²



Fig 4 G&S 1981, Class II, lion couchant to left on reverse; Var. IIa: obverse legend caṇdragupta_kumāradevī. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, cat. no. 6, 7.52 g (116.0-116.1 grains), 2.00 cm (photographs after G&S 1981:fig. 1.6)



Fig.5 G&S 1981, Class II, lion couchant to left on reverse; Var. IIb: obverse legend caṇdragupta śrī-kumāradevī [ER-ḥ]. Baldwin's Sale no. 45 (3 May 2006), lot no. 1212, 7.70 g (118.8-118.9 grains) (photographs courtesy AH Baldwin & Sons)



Fig 6a and b BM coin, cat. no. 23, of G&S Var. IIb, 7.32 g (113 grains), 2.03 cm (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 3.1); 6b. Coin of G&S Variety IIa, Baldwin's Sale no. 9 (13 January 2005), lot no. 284, 7.50 g (115.7-115.8 grains) (photographs courtesy AH Baldwin & Sons)

One level up

Rather than redo Gupta and Srivastava's work, it is time to stop classifying Gupta coins type by type (the splitting) and move on to develop a broader view which transcends the level of types and ideally and ultimately operates at the level of multiple types at particular Gupta mints. For this purpose I am developing a research database with digital data on Gupta gold coins which may help to

qualify and quantify the buildup of this corpus. Even a relatively simple column chart (fig. 7) reveals quantitative relative data on Gupta coins that have not been specified before, for the simple reason that this material has always been treated type-wise rather than as an inherently coherent whole. We should all become ‘lumpers’ and acknowledge that coins issued in the name of Samudragupta show an internal patterning which allows them to be divided over 18 design groups; or even less if one allows for some design variation within each group.

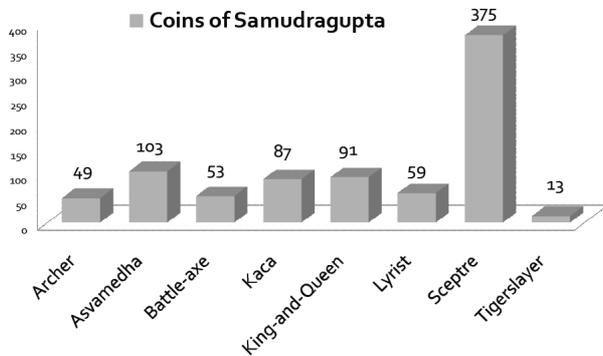


Fig.7 Relative type distribution in the database on 1 May 2010. Some 831 coins of Samudragupta registered by that date.

The internal coherence of coins in each of these groups is defined by mint-idiomatic features such as style, iconography, legends, palaeography, symbols, size, weight and gold content. Each coin type present in a group may be represented by a number of strikes from different dies, all revealing the shared mint-idiom. As for type distribution: not every type recurs in each group, so the database reveals. And so far this is perhaps the most exciting and fruitful outcome of this innovative approach.

Design distribution

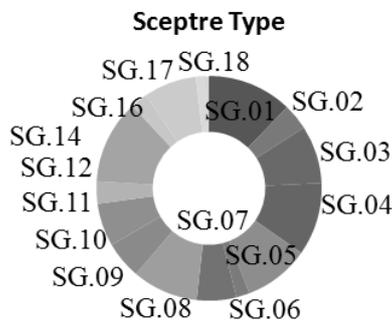


Fig.8. Sceptre Type, with 16 design variants out of 18 groups.

Not surprisingly, Samudragupta’s Sceptre Type (fig. 8) is the most prolific in design diversity, with a presence in 16 out of the 18 groups traced so far. The sheer number of Sceptre coins that were struck and thus dies engraved, must have contributed to this. So, to avoid any misunderstanding, these are *not* individual varieties within the Sceptre Type series alone (which would be the splitter’s approach), but variants as *shared* with the other coins of Samudragupta (which is the lumpers’ approach). Quite surprisingly really, the King-and-Queen Type is the runner-up in sharing its designs with those for the other seven coin types of Samudragupta. So far they are present in 8 out of the 18 design groups (fig. 9).

Most of Samudragupta’s coin types exist in 4 or 3 shared design variants, such as the Battle-axe (fig. 10), Asvamedha (fig. 11), Kāca (fig. 12), Lyrist (fig. 13) and Archer Types (fig. 14). The rare Tiger-slayer coins (fig. 15) belong to one and the same shared design group, in spite of even the inclusion of varying legends.

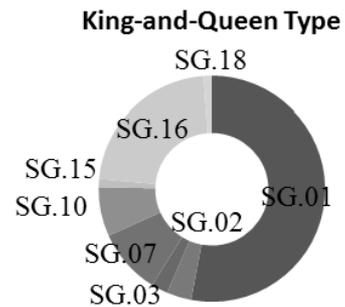


Fig.9 King-and-Queen Type, with 8 design variants out of 18 groups

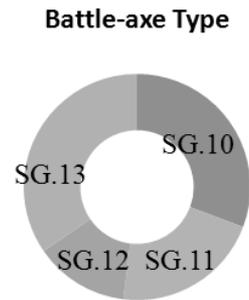


Fig.10 Battle-axe Type, with 4 design variants out of 18 groups.

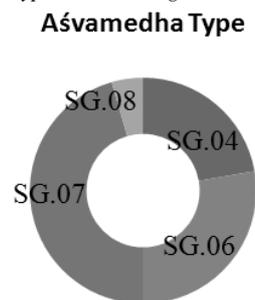


Fig.11 Asvamedha Type, with 4 design variants out of 18 groups.

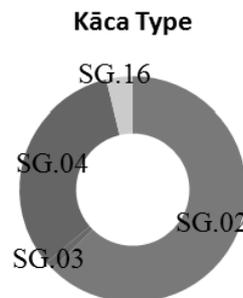


Fig.12 Kāca Type, with 4 design variants out of 18 groups.

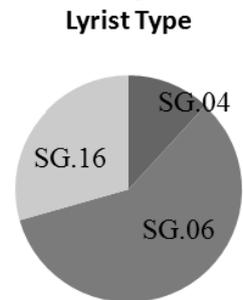


Fig.13 Lyrist Type, with 3 design variants out of 18 groups.

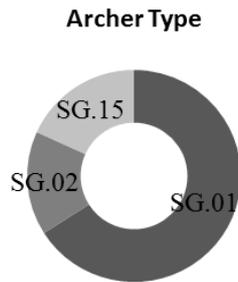


Fig.14 Archer Type, with 3 design variants out of 18 groups.

Tiger-slayer Type



Fig.15 Tiger-slayer Type, with 1 design variant out of 18 groups

The King and Queen coins

How do the King-and Queen coins fit in this patterning? Design Group **SG.01** includes three mint-idiomatically related designs for the Sceptre, Archer and King-and-Queen coins, with the obverse legend *candragupta-kumāradevīsrīḥ* (fig. 16a-d). A pie-chart reveals their relative amounts in the database per 1 May 2010.³ In **Group SG.02** (fig. 17a-e) the King-and-Queen coins (with the legend *candragupta-kumāradevī*) are only a minority segment, while most coins represent Samudragupta as Kāca, the one who uproots his royal opponents; the Sceptre and Archer coins in this group are relatively few.



Fig.16 Relative amounts (16a) of three types in Group SG.01⁴

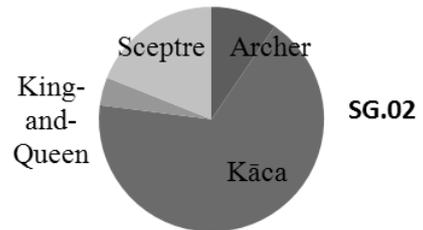


Fig.17 Relative amounts (17a) of four types in Group SG.02⁵

In **Group SG.03**, the King-and-Queen coins (with legend *candragupta-kumāradevī*) and those of Kāca Type are only minimally represented, against a majority of Sceptre coins (fig. 18a-d), while in Groups **SG.04** (fig. 19a-d), **SG.05** (fig. 20) and **SG.06** (fig. 21a-d), the King-and-Queen coins are absent. Most coins in **Group SG.07** are of the Aśvamedha Type, together with those of Sceptre Type and a relatively modest segment of King-and-Queen coins (with the legend *candragupta-śrī-kumāradevī*) (fig. 22a-d). The latter include designs with a lion to right or to left,⁶ confirming that the position of this mount cannot serve to distinguish separate King-and-Queen Type classes.

Groups **SG.08** (fig. 23a-c) and **SG.09** (fig. 24) are devoid of King-and-Queen coins, but Group **SG.10** includes them next to those of Sceptre and Battle-axe Types (fig. 25a-d). The king wears a quite distinctive tunic and a *dhoti* decorated with prominent ornamental beading down the front, along the collar and sleeves. Groups **SG.11** (fig. 26a-c), **SG.12** (fig. 27a-c), **SG.13** (fig. 28) and **SG.14** (fig. 29) do not include King-and-Queen designs. The die engraver who excelled in creating a superb Archer coin variety now in **Group SG.15**, also prepared a matching King-and-Queen device (fig. 30a-c). Luckily King-and-Queen coins (with an obverse legend read as *candragupta śrī-kumāradevī*) are also found in **Group SG.16**, together with rare Kāca coins, a large amount of Sceptre coins and a modest amount of Lyrist coins (fig. 31a-e). Both individually and together these coins immediately catch the eye as being smaller and slightly heavier than those of all other groups, but also for being engraved with great artistic ingenuity. Less refined in their engraving than those of Group SG.16, but with a related design, are the Sceptre coins that constitute the fairly small **Group SG.17** (fig. 32).

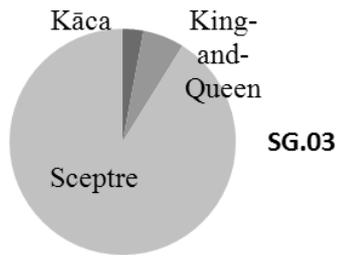


Fig.18a-d Relative amounts(18a) of three types in Group SG.03⁷

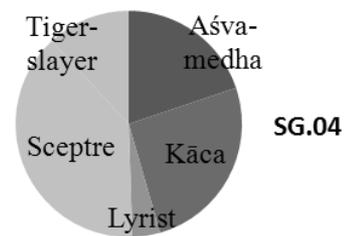


Fig.19 Relative amounts (19a) of five types in Group SG.04⁸

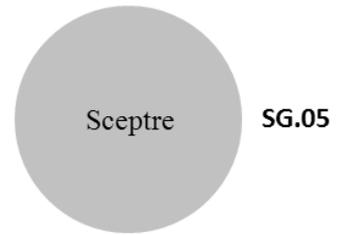


Fig.20 Sceptre Type coin in Group SG.05⁹

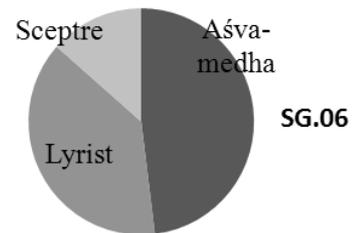


Fig.21 Relative amounts (21a) of three types in Group SG.06¹⁰

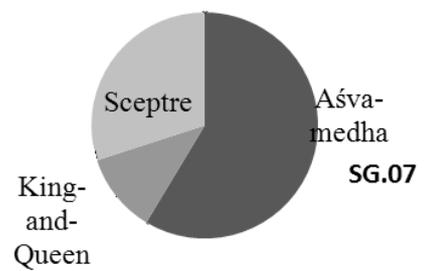




Fig.22 Relative amounts (22a) of three types in Group SG.07¹¹

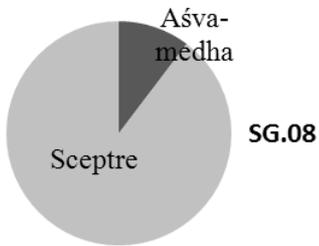


Fig.23 Relative amounts (23a) of two types in Group SG.08¹²

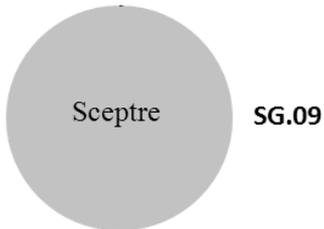


Fig.24 Sceptre Type coin in Group SG.09¹³

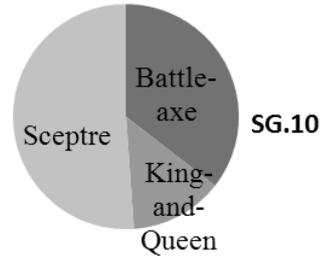


Fig.25 Relative amounts (25a) of three types in Group SG.10¹⁴

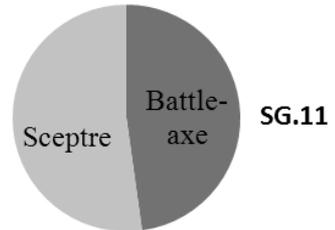


Fig.26 Relative amounts (26a) of two types in Group SG.11¹⁵

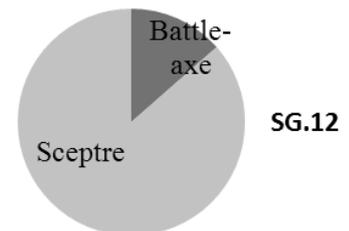




Fig.27 Relative amounts (27a) of two types in Group SG.12¹⁶



Fig.30 Relative amounts (30a) of two types in Group SG.15¹⁹

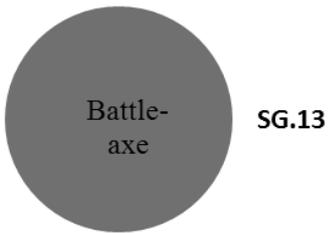


Fig.28 Group SG.13 with Battle-axe Type coins¹⁷

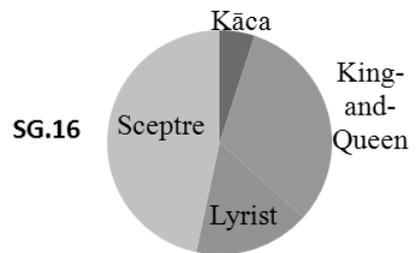


Fig.31 Relative amounts (31a) of four types in Group SG.16²⁰

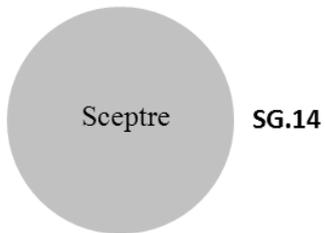


Fig.29 Group SG.14 with Sceptre Type coins¹⁸





Fig.32 Group SG.17 with Sceptre Type coins²¹

This sorting into groups reveals the patterns that tie these designs together, so we are not splitting but lumping. The design variants create bridges for us to see between the eight coin types struck for Samudragupta; bridges that have gone largely unnoticed so far. The next challenge is to see whether and, if so, how these designs can be tied to specific teams operating at specific mints or workshops. Can a broad minting chronology be developed on the basis of these data? I hope so, but it will demand a careful comparative analysis.

A first look tells us that the King-and-Queen designs are closely locked across the design groups (fig. 9) and therefore most probably were struck at a number of different mints. This would make it very unlikely indeed that these coins were created as sole issues under Candragupta I. Likewise, the Kāca Type, which some wish to attribute to a King Kāca ruling after Samudragupta, reveals close design links with other coins of Samudragupta (fig. 12). This sits uneasily with a post-Samudragupta role for Kāca on the Gupta stage, though it is certainly not conclusive proof for their manufacture during the reign of Samudragupta.

The pattern that has evolved from the analysis thus far also offers a touchstone. When a certain coin cannot be matched to any known design group, it requires further scrutiny. Does it match the format of its assumed time of manufacture (for instance through devices, fabric or the use of legends)? And if so, can it be a sole survivor of a thus far undetected group?

A case at hand is a specific King-and-Queen coin (fig. 33) from the Indian Museum holdings (acq. no. 18087).²² With a weight of 8.03 g (123.9 grains), it appears too heavy for Samudragupta's time. But it was not only its weight that struck me as odd, but also the style and iconography of the devices. The coin portrays a muscular, rather fleshy Candragupta I, his hair, secured with a band, cascading down in small curls along the nape of his neck. A prominent oval earring, a necklace with round beads and triple-loop armlets on the upper arms just above the elbows contribute to the lavishness of the design. The postures of Chandragupta I and Kumāradevī are outspokenly bent at the hips in a way more likely to be encountered in coins from an advanced phase of minting under Candragupta II. The choice to portray the king as a fleshy man with a bare torso and a lavish, curly hairstyle also better fits the later idioms. The seated goddess on the reverse sits in *ardhaparyāṅkāśana*, her left leg tucked up flat on the head of the reclining lion, more clearly so than on coins of design Group SG.02 (fig. 17b). The cornucopia in her left hand is difficult to make out clearly on the photograph published in the Indian Museum catalogue. The specific gravity of 15.35 given for the coin seems to indicate that its gold content is fairly low for Samudragupta's time,²³ but similar values have been reported for specific Sceptre coins of that king (the interpretation of available specific gravity data for Gupta coins is quite problematic anyway).²⁴

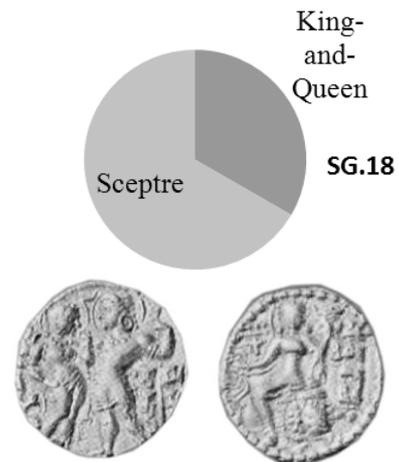


Fig.33 Group SG.18, K&Q Type coin²⁵

The heavy King-and-Queen coin is not the sole occupant of Group SG.18. I have come across two more, related coins, both of Sceptre Type. The first of them (fig. 34) was acquired by the Indian Museum as well (acc. no. C18085).²⁶ Its weight of 7.864 g (121.3 grains) puts it at the top end of what was common for *dīnāras* in the time of Samudragupta. With its recorded size of 2.40 cm, it is among the largest Gupta coins I have ever come across. Rather problematic also is the iconography of the Garuḍa-banner on the obverse, which resembles those of Candragupta II's time rather than the banners on coins of Samudragupta. The king's outwardly thrust standing posture mirrors that of Candragupta I in the King-and-Queen coin, and in both designs he is given a curly hairdo tied with a headband. The geometric symbol neatly links the two designs as well. A strong argument against a later date for coins of design Group SG.18 is the portrait of Śrī-Lakṣmī seated on her throne, as it closely resembles that on coins of design Group SG.16. The duplicated ridge on the lotus beneath her feet is specific for Group SG.18 though.



Fig.34 Group SG.18, Samudragupta, Sceptre Type²⁷

The third coin, again of Sceptre Type (fig. 35), seems to secure the entire group within the fold of Samudragupta's mints, in spite of the latish features of the two coins discussed so far. The Sceptre coin was offered in Baldwin's Sale no. 26 (9 May 2001) as lot no. 1002. With 7.90 g (121.9 grains) it approaches the weight of coins in Group SG.16 of around 7.80 g and its small size of 1.90 cm is also in tune with those coins.²⁸ The legend under the left arm, giving us the king's name, is quite blurred and difficult to decipher from a photograph. Details such as the king's curly hair, perhaps tied with a band, the duplicated ridge on the lotus beneath Śrī-Lakṣmī's feet, and the shape of the geometric symbol at her side confirm that the attribution to design Group SG.18 is warranted.



Fig.35 Group SG.18, Samudragupta, Sceptre Type²⁹

I have lumped together the coins of Samudragupta into 18 design groups without going into elaborate descriptions to support these specific attributions, as such an exercise would require a different publication format. The present paper aimed mostly to reveal the potential of the new approach: viz., to see differences differently.

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Notes

- I side with those numismatists that believe these coins were issued by Samudragupta.
- G&S Variety Ib with lion to right in W. Hoey's collection, as illustrated by Allan, 1914: 9, fig. 3.5; G&S Variety Iib with lion to left, Baldwin's Sale no. 43 (11 October 2005), lot 2724.
- In Group SG.01 the Sceptre and King-and-Queen coins exist in near-equal numbers, which somehow I had not expected.
- 16b. K&Q Type, BM, London, coin no. 28, 8.02 g (123.8 grains), 2.03 cm (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 3.10); 16c. Archer Type, Shivlee coll., 7.6 g (117.3 grains) (photographs courtesy Shivlee); 16d. Sceptre Type, Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam, acq. no. 14.253, 7.67 g (118.3 grains), 2.20 cm (photographs E.M. Raven).
- 17b. King-and-Queen Type, Bode Museum, Berlin (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 3.15); 17c. Kāca Type, Shivlee coll., ex G.M. Browne coll.; ex Skanda coll. (photographs courtesy Shivlee); 17d. Sceptre Type, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, cat. no. 16, 7.65 g (118.0-118.1 grains), 2.00 cm (photographs E.M. Raven); 17e. Archer Type, State Museum Lucknow, acq. no. 11405, 7.34 g (113.2 grains), 2.10 cm (photographs E.M. Raven).
- Coin in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, illustrated by Allan 1914:fig. 3.14.
- 18b. King-and-Queen Type, Pankaj Tandon coll., 7.50 g (115.7-115.8 grains) (photographs courtesy P. Tandon); 18c. Sceptre Type, BM, London, cat. no. 7, 7.35 g (113.4 grains) (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 1.9); 18d. Kāca Type, Nupam Mahajan coll., 7.6 g (117.3 grains) (photographs courtesy N. Mahajan).
- Includes a.o.:19b. Aśvamedha Type, Lingen coll., 7.8 g (116.9-117.0 grains) (photographs courtesy J. Lingen); 19c. Kāca Type, Bayana hoard no. 200, Patna Museum, acq. no. 18576, 7.59 g (117.2 grains), 1.98 cm (photographs E.M. Raven); 19d. Lyryst Type, Ira & Larry Goldberg, Auction no. 42 (23 September 2007), lot no. 843, 7.57 g (116.8 grains) (photographs courtesy I.&L. Goldberg).
- Baldwin's New York Sale no. 17 (9 January 2008), lot no. 310, 7.75 g (119.6 grains) (photographs courtesy AH Baldwin & Sons, London).
- 21b. Sceptre Type, Baldwin's New York Sale no. 20 (7 January 2009), lot no. 495, 7.78 g (120.0 grains) (photographs courtesy AH Baldwin & Sons, London); 21c. Aśvamedha Type, Nupam Mahajan coll., 7.39 g (114.0 grains) (photographs courtesy N. Mahajan); 21d. Lyryst Type, Lingen coll., 7.38 g (113.9 grains), 2.20 cm (photographs courtesy J. Lingen).
- 22b. K&Q Type, Nupam Mahajan coll., 7.80 g (120.4 grains) (photographs courtesy N. Mahajan); 22c. Sceptre Type, formerly Jucker coll., Basel, no. G16, 7.56 g (116.6-116.7 grains) (photographs E.M. Raven); 22d. Aśvamedha Type, Lingen coll., 7.73 g (117.3 grains), 2.00 cm (photographs courtesy J. Lingen).
- 23b. Sceptre Type, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, cat. no. 22, 7.90 g (121.9 grains), 2.20 cm (photographs E.M. Raven); 23b. Aśvamedha Type, formerly Jucker coll., Basel, no. G2, 7.68 g (118.5 grains), 2.30 cm (photographs E.M. Raven).
- Shivlee coll. (photographs courtesy Shivlee).
- 25b. K&Q Type, Shivlee coll., 7.40 g (114.2 grains) (photographs courtesy Shivlee); 25c. Sceptre Type, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, cat. no. 33,

- 7.46 g (115.1-115.2 grains), 2.00 cm (photographs E.M. Raven); 25d. Battle-Axe Type, Shivlee coll., ex G.M. Browne coll. (photographs courtesy Shivlee).
- 26b. Sceptre Type, Pankaj Tandon coll., 7.66 g (118.2 grains) (photographs courtesy P. Tandon); 26c. Battle-axe Type, Shivlee coll. (photographs courtesy Shivlee).
- 27b. Battle-axe Type, BM, London, cat. no. 37, 7.63 g (117.7 grains) (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 4.13); 27c. Sceptre Type, Patna Museum, acq. no. 18581, 7.58 g (116.9 grains) (photographs E.M. Raven).
- Formerly Jucker coll., Basel, no. G15, 7.66 g (118.2 grains), 2.10 cm (photographs E.M. Raven).
- Shivlee coll. (photographs courtesy Shivlee).
- 30b. K&Q Type, Government Museum Mathura, acq. no. 1.15, 7.617 g (117.5 grains), 2.40 cm (photographs courtesy A.K. Srivastava, Lucknow); 30c. Archer Type, Hess-Divo, Sale no. 314 (4 May 2009), lot no. 1251, ex De La Tour coll., 7.74 g (119.4-119.5 grains) (photographs courtesy Hess-Divo).
- 31a. K&Q Type, BM, London, cat. no. 27, 7.69 g (118.6 grains), 2.03 cm (photographs after Allan 1914:fig. 3.9); 31c. Lyryst Type, Shivlee coll. (photographs courtesy Shivlee); 31d. Sceptre Type, Patna Museum, acq. no. 18578, 7.72 g (119.1 grains), 2.00 cm (photographs E.M. Raven); 31e. Kāca Type, Shivlee coll., 7.80 g (120.4 grains), 1.80 cm (photographs courtesy Shivlee).
- Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, cat. no. 30, 7.77 g (118.8-118.9 grains), 2.00 cm (photographs E.M. Raven).
- Basu 1977:no. 451, fig. 15.2; Mukherjee 1990:no. 71.
- Compare Table 78 for specific gravities on record for certain Sceptre coins of Samudragupta, in Raven 1994:463.
- I wish to thank Robert Bracey for sharing his experience with difficulties that one may encounter when trying to interpret published specific gravity data for Gupta coins. New analyses according to up-to-date techniques are necessary to secure reliable data.
- Indian Museum, Kolkata, cat. no. 71, 8.03 g (123.9 grains), 2.11 cm (photographs after Mukherjee 1990:fig. 71, courtesy Indian Museum, Kolkata).
- Basu 1977:no. 453.
- Indian Museum, Kolkata, acc. no. C18085, 7.864 g (121.3 grains), 2.40 cm (photographs E.M. Raven).
- I attribute design Group SG.16 to Mint B, known for its small (1.90-2.00 cm), neatly engraved and relatively 'heavy' coins, which were always struck to the standard of 7.80 g (120.4 grains). See Raven 1994:186-187.
- Baldwin's Sale no. 26 (9 May 2001), lot no. 1002, 7.90 g (121.9 grains), 1.90 cm (photographs courtesy AH Baldwin & Sons, London).

AN IMPORTANT UNPUBLISHED ADIVARAHA COIN IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

Pratipal Bhatia

1.1 Introduction

The Adivaraha coins have been known to scholars of early medieval north Indian numismatics and history since the early nineteenth century when William Marsden's beautiful illustration of an Adivaraha coin,¹ marked under the category of 'uncertain coins' was put before the 'discerning public of the day'.² With the exception of a single known gold coin,³ these coins were issued in silver, billon and perhaps copper. The Adivaraha coins were intended to be of a circular shape though most surviving coins are of oval shape, and towards the end of the series some coins look triangular and some look shapeless. The flans of the Adivaraha coins were smaller than the dies used, with the result that complete obverse and reverse designs are not seen on any single Adivaraha coin. One has to put a couple of coins together to restore the entire intended obverse and reverse designs. The obverse of these coins bear the figure of a two-armed Adivaraha, the *varahavatara* or Boar incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, having a boar's head on a human body, striding right with his left foot raised above the head of a lion that is also facing right. The Adivaraha is depicted in the act of lifting the earth goddess from the cosmic ocean, with his left arm bent at his elbow and his hand almost touching the bent knee of his raised left leg. In the right field two attributes of god Vishnu are depicted, a *gada* (mace) and *chakra* (wheel or disc), which on some coins looks like a sun symbol, and is described as a solar wheel by V. A. Smith.⁴ In addition to these

attributes, three bold dots or pellets also appear in the right field, of which one is always put above the elbow of the Adivaraha, a second dot appears above the *chakra* symbol and the third dot appears below the *chakra* symbol closer to the left raised foot of the Adivaraha, and on some coins a crescent is seen in the extreme right closer to the dotted border. The right hand of the Adivaraha is put on his right thigh, and in the left field just above the right foot of the Adivaraha there is a *shankha* or conch, the emblem of Vishnu. Above that, another symbol is seen which looks like a tree with a rounded trunk at the bottom, perhaps indicative of a *padma* or lotus. Another series of Adivaraha coins have a leafy plant with long stem identified as a lotus. Its drooping leaves form an inverted bell-shaped parasol that is seen above the head of the Adivaraha.⁵ The reverse of the Adivaraha coins have a proto-Nagari legend inscribed in triangle-headed script⁶ in two lines that read,

*srimadadi
varaha*

Below this legend is the middle part of the stylised, Sasanian-type fire altar flanked by two attendants that are partly visible on different coins; sometimes an attendant is seen on the left side and sometimes on the right side and sometimes none at all. The style of the partial fire altar as depicted in the Adivaraha coins has a close resemblance to the middle part of the fire altar as depicted on the *Sri Vi* series of Indo-Sasanian type coins (see below coin 7).⁷ Thus the upper part of the fire altar in which the 'sacred fire' is indicated by symbols and dots, was replaced by the proto-Nagari legend, *Srimadadi varaha*, which is the name of the deity depicted on the obverse as well as a title or *biruda* of the Pratihara king, Sri Bhojadeva.⁸ He is also described as Paramesvara Sri Bhojadeva in the second Gwalior inscription,⁹ and Mihira Bhoja in another inscription from Gwalior.¹⁰ These coins do not have dates or mint names on them. In contemporary inscriptions and literature, these coins are referred to as *srimadadi varaha-dramma*¹¹ or *varaha mudra*¹² They generally weigh between 4.1 and 3.8g. The credit of initiating the Adivaraha series of coins is given by scholars¹³ to the Pratihara king, Mihira Bhoja (c. AD 836-892).¹⁴ He is the seventh ruler in descent in the genealogical list of seventeen rulers, with known dates, of the Pratihara dynasty of Kanauj¹⁵ who ruled for about three centuries as paramount rulers of northern India.¹⁶

1.2 In 1992, while studying the Indo-Sasanian coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,¹⁷ I came across a unique Adivaraha coin, similar but different from the Adivaraha coins that I had seen in the British Museum and all other museums that I had visited by then in India and other countries (see below coin 1). I was extremely excited by this new type of Adivaraha coin but did not publish it, hoping to get some more specimens to confirm that I was correct in my judgement about this coin. I got a transparency made from the photograph of this particular coin and showed it to several scholars in Calcutta, Nasik, and some coin collectors in Delhi, but they all said that they had not seen this type of Adivaraha coin before. Later I talked to R. D. Bhatt, a young coin collector in New Delhi, and requested him to keep looking for this particular type of coins. A couple of years later I met this collector in New Delhi and he said he had found some Adivaraha coins. Among his two newly acquired Adivaraha coins I found one coin that looked similar to 'the unique Adivaraha coin' of the Ashmolean Museum (see below coin 2). I had the Adivaraha coins photographed, and the owner agreed that I could publish those coins.¹⁸ Years passed by and I kept making enquiries at different museums about the Ashmolean-type Adivaraha coins. In 2008, during my research study visit to the State Museum, Lucknow, I was lucky to find two Adivaraha coins that looked similar to the Ashmolean-type coin (see below coins 3-4). They appeared among the coins of Treasure Trove Lot No. 229 that was acquired by the State Museum, Lucknow, on 29 July 2003 under the Treasure Trove Act from the Police Station of Khutar located in Tehsil Powayan in District Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The circumstances of the find are not known. The Shahjahanpur hoard has 300 silver and billion

coins and eleven pieces of silver jewellery, which are currently in the coin cabinet of the State Museum, Lucknow.¹⁹ During a casual conversation with the staff members of the numismatic section of the that museum, I was informed verbally that such coins do appear sometimes among the Adivaraha coin hoards. In recent years another treasure trove hoard of 132 silver coins of 'the Pratihara kings' was found during the levelling of an old mound in the village of Korain in the Tehsil and District of Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh. The find spot of the hoard is located at a distance of nine km to the west of the district head office of Fatehpur. The coins of this hoard, along with the images of 42 coins, are published in a brief article in summary form.²⁰ The author of the article has made reference to 'one Adivaraha coin that looks somewhat different from other Adivaraha coins'²¹ of the Korain hoard that are published by him. In fact the reverse of that somewhat different-looking coin is similar to the Ashmolean type 'unique Adivaraha coin'.²² The coins of the Korain hoard are now in the custody of the authorities of Shri M. L. Dikshit Inter College, Fatehpur.²³ The published images of the coins in the article in question look rather poor and are not assigned any reference or serial numbers. The image of the Ashmolean-type Adivaraha coin, as it appears in the above-mentioned article, is reproduced here for the convenience of our readers (see below coin 6).²⁴ Thus, by then I had examined and collected images and details of five coins that looked similar to the Ashmolean Museum 'unique' Adivaraha-type coin. I felt it was time to write and put these coins before the numismatic community. After I submitted my paper, I was informed by Dr John S. Deyell that he, too, has a coin in his collection that looked similar to the Ashmolean-type Adivaraha coin, and its scan was included among some coin images that he sent to me in 2008. He suggested that I could include and publish this coin in my paper.²⁵ Now we have six known Adivaraha coins that may be described as 'unique'. Having said this I would now like to discuss the details of these six coins.

	<p>1.2.1 Coin 1: unpublished Provenance: unknown Purchased: Spink 11-2-55 H. De. S. Shortt bequest 1975</p>
	<p>Metal AR Wt. 3.92 g Size 19 x 16 mm Thickness: 2.1 mm Shape: Oval</p>
	<p>Current location: The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, UK.</p>

1.2.1: The obverse of this oval-shaped and worn coin shows the upper part of two-armed Adivaraha or Primeval Boar facing right. The lower part is worn out but faint traces of the legs of the Adivaraha and upper part of a lion facing right are visible. In the upper right field a well-engraved *gada* or mace near the left shoulder of the Adivaraha, and below it part of a *chakra* or wheel that is described as a solar wheel because of its resemblance with the sun symbol, are visible. In the lower left field, the upper part of a *shankha* or conch, and, in the upper left field, a tree or creeper with a rounded trunk below and some of its leaves going above the head of the Adivaraha,²⁶ indicative of *padma* or lotus, are visible. Thus the obverse of this coin depicts the two-armed Adivaraha or *varahavatara* of the Hindu god, Vishnu, with his four attributes: *gada* or mace, *chakra* or wheel or discus, *shankha* or conch, and *padma* or lotus. The obverse of this coin has the characteristic

features of the Adivaraha coins of Series 1 as well as of Series 2, suggested in my earlier classification of the Adivaraha coins.²⁷ What makes this coin unique is its reverse. The reverse has the proto-Nagari legend in two lines (*srimadadi varaha*, of which only the lower part of line one and the second line, that reads *varaha*, are visible. Below the legend, the middle part of the stylised, partial fire altar, flanked by two attendants, is partly visible. In the centre of the stylised, partial fire altar appears a large proto-Nagari syllable *ma* inscribed in triangle-headed script. The presence of the syllable *ma* in addition to the legend above distinguishes this coin from all other Adivaraha coins of all the series.

Further, the presence of the proto-Nagari syllable *ma* in the centre of the reverse partial fire altar brings this coin closer to another early medieval north Indian coin series that is labelled the *Sri Vig* or *Sri Vig(ra)* series of Indo-Sasanian coins.²⁸ The latter coins have, on the obverse, a Sasanian-style bust facing right and a proto-Nagari legend in two lines in front and below the bust that reads *Sri Vig* or *Sri Vig(ra)*. The reverse of these coins have a stylised Sasanian-type fire altar flanked by two attendants, and a proto-Nagari syllable *ma* is inscribed in place of the shaft of the fire altar on the coins (see below coins 8-10).²⁹ The *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* coins are found in association with early Indo-Sasanian, *Sri Vi* and Adivaraha coin series, and are met with in fairly large numbers all over northern India, in excavations³⁰ and in treasure trove coin hoards.³¹ Palaeographically the coins of this series seem to be later than the coins of the *Sri Vi* series, and this is supported by hoard evidence, too. In all the large hoards examined so far we find that the coins of *Sri Vi* are more worn compared to coins of the *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* series. The 'unique Adivaraha coin' of the Ashmolean Museum combines some features of *Sri Vi*, *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* and Sri Adivaraha coins of two different series. The use of the syllable *ma* on the Adivaraha series is certainly of great significance and conveys an important message, but what is that message?

	1.2.2 Coin 2: Unpublished Provenance not known Purchased coin
	Metal AR Wt. 4.21g Size 19 x 16 mm Thickness 2.1 mm Shape oval
	Current location: R. D. Bhatt Collection, New Delhi, India.

1.2.2: This coin is not a mule, rather it is the intentional assimilation of some design elements of the *Sri Vi* and *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* coin series into a new and innovative design, albeit for a short period of time as explained by the fact that these coins seem to be rare. Did the syllable *ma* signify the name of the issuer, place of minting or something else? It is difficult to give a definite answer. All that I would like to say at this point is that the 'unique Adivaraha coin' of the Ashmolean museum combines some important features of four major coin series of north Indian coinage of the early medieval period, and this is important.

This coin is similar to the preceding coin but it is better preserved except that a part of its lower right-hand side is worn. Its obverse shows a powerful, robust and aggressive-looking Adivaraha striding right, and a lion below also facing right. The upper part of the lion and its curved tail are clearly visible on this coin. This style of

depicting the Adivaraha, especially his outstretched right leg, is similar to the Adivaraha as depicted on an engraved semi-transparent yellow chalcedony ring bezel now in the Peshawar Museum, Pakistan.³² The *gada* or mace in the upper right field of the obverse of this coin is similar to the *gada* as depicted in coin 1.2.1. In the lower right field, almost a complete *chakra* or wheel, consisting of six or seven dots inside a circle ☉ or ☺, is visible. It looks similar to the *chakra* symbol on the obverse, of which only a minute portion is visible on coin 1.2.1. In the lower left field, not too far from the right foot of the Adivaraha, a large *shankha* or conch is visible, and, in the upper left field, there is a tree or creeper with a rounded trunk of the same style as seen on coin 1.2.1 and faint traces of its leaves that go above the head of the Adivaraha are also visible, except that it is slightly chipped from the left side. Part of a dotted border can be seen to the right. The reverse of coin 1.2.2 has two lines of proto-Nagari legend that read (*sri madadi varaha*). Below the legend we can see part of a Sasanian-type fire altar flanked by two attendants; of these the left-hand attendant is clearly visible. In the centre of the partial fire altar there is a large proto-Nagari syllable *ma* inscribed in triangle-headed script. Traces of a dotted border are visible above. It is the presence of the proto-Nagari syllable *ma* that makes its reverse distinctive, and puts it into the category of the 'unique' Adivaraha-type coin of the Ashmolean Museum.

	1.2.3 Coin .3 : unpublished Provenance: known Khutar, (NP) town, Tehsil Powayan District Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
	Metal AR Wt. 3.93g Size 16 x 15 mm Thickness 2.0 mm Shape oval
	Current location: The State Museum, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

1.2.3: This coin was found among the coins of the Treasure Trove Lot No. 229, consisting of 300 silver and billon coins, and eleven pieces of silver jewellery that were acquired by the State Museum, Lucknow. This lot has 105 coins of *Sri Vi*, 18 coins of the *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* series and 177 coins of the Adivaraha series. Among the *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* series only six coins have the syllable *ma* on the reverse, and other coins have either the syllable *sa* or do not have any syllable. Most of the coins in this hoard are extremely worn specimens, especially the coins of the *Sri Vi* series. There are no Adivaraha coins with the reverse legend reading *Sri Vinayakapaladeva* that are attributed to the Pratihara king Sri Vinayakapaladeva (c. AD 931-943).³³ It is concluded, therefore, that the coins of the Shahjahanpur hoard were hoarded and buried prior to the issue of the coins of Sri Vinayakapaladeva.

The obverse of coin 1.2.3 is similar to coins 1.2.1 – 1.2.2. It has a two-armed Adivaraha striding right, but it is a crude specimen on which the Adivaraha is drawn in thick lines and lacks the artistic treatment of the preceding two coins. His left raised leg is not proportionate to his body and his right leg is not clearly visible; it seems hidden behind the lion below. The head of the Adivaraha is partly off flan, the die may have shifted during the process of striking the coin. However, this is the only coin on which a complete lion along with its long legs and its tail curled up on its back is seen walking to right. The flan of this coin is small and dumpy as compared to the flans of coins 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, and the die used is large. In the upper right field only a remnant of the *gada* or mace in the form of a line is visible; the rest is off the flan. In the lower right

field, part of a *chakra* of a different design ⊕ is visible.³⁴ In the left lower field a large *shankha* or conch is clearly visible. Slightly above it is a thick, straight line with a small curve attached to it that may be recognised as the stalk of *padma* or lotus with a miniscule part of a leaf attached to it on the right side. Coin 1.2.3 is struck by a new obverse die which is stylistically different from the obverse dies of the preceding two coins. On the reverse of this coin the first line of the proto-Nagari legend is only partly visible; perhaps the die shifted during the process of striking the coin. The second line of the legend that reads *varaha* is visible, but its last syllable, *ha*, is partly off the flan. Part of the Sasanian-style fire altar, flanked by two attendants, is visible below the legend. Of the two attendants, the one in the left field is clearly visible and the attendant in the right field is off the flan. Like the preceding two coins, a large proto-Nagari syllable *ma* is inscribed in the central part of the partial fire altar, and the palaeography of the reverse legend is similar to the palaeography of the reverse legends of coins 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. A beaded border is visible below.

	1.2.4 Coin 4: Unpublished Provenance: known Khutar, (NP) town, Tehsil Powayan District Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
	Metal AR Wt. 3.94g Size 16 x 15 mm Thickness 2.3 mm Shape oval
	Current location: The State Museum, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

1.2.4: This coin, like the preceding coin, belongs to Treasure Trove Lot No. 229 that was found in District Shahjahanpur. The right side of the obverse of this coin is badly worn but is still recognisable. The style of depicting the Adivaraha is similar to the Adivaraha as depicted in the preceding coin but the Adivaraha's head is on the flan and so is the lotus creeper that looks like a trident in the left field. It seems the leaves of the lotus go above the head of the Adivaraha but, the coin being worn, the leaves are not clearly visible. Part of the *shankha* or conch is visible below the lotus. Due to the worn condition of the coin the lion is not clearly visible below the left foot of the Adivaraha. The reverse of the coin, though worn on the left side, looks similar to the reverse of the preceding coin. Part of the proto-Nagari legend that reads *Sri (madadi) varah(a)* is visible. Below that, the large syllable *ma* is clearly visible. On both sides, traces of the partial fire altar and left-hand side attendant may be noticed.

The obverse of coin 1.2.5 is similar to coins 1.2.3-1.2.4 especially in the depiction of the Adivaraha and *chakra* or wheel, which looks like the partially visible *chakra* in coin 1.2.3. The mace or *gada* in the right field merges with the edge of the coin and, therefore, is not clearly visible. However a pellet is seen below the elbow of the Adivaraha and a lion walking right is visible below the left raised foot of the Adivaraha. In the left field, traces of the lotus creeper and a *shankha* or conch may be noticed.

The obverse of coin 1.2.6 has part of the Adivaraha surrounded by some blurred and smudged symbols, and the reverse has two lines of Nagari script that read *sri (madadi) varaha*, and below that is part of a Sasanian-type partial fire altar flanked by partially visible attendants. In the published image, a proto-Nagari syllable *ma* is visible in the central part of the partial fire altar. The dies used for striking this coin seem to be different from the ones used for striking the preceding five coins.

	1.2.5 Coin 5: Unpublished Provenance: Unknown
	Metal: AR Weight: 4.11g Size: 16 mm x 17mm Thickness: 2 mm x 3mm Shape: wedge shaped, oval
	Current location: Deyell Collection, Canada.

The reverse of this coin is also similar to coins 1.2.3 – 1.2.4. It has the similar proto-Nagari legend of which the lower part of the first line is visible followed by the second line that reads *varaha*. Below that is the partial fire altar flanked by attendants of which the attendant in the right-hand field is very well depicted and stylistically closely resembles the attendant in the left-hand field of coin 1.2.3. In the central part of the partial fire altar a slightly worn proto-Nagari syllable *ma* is visible.

	1.2.6 Coin 6 : published ³⁵ Provenance: known Village Korain, Tehsil and District Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh. It is part of a treasure trove hoard. Its published image is poor but is still recognisable.
	Date of the find is not available.
	Metal :AR Shape: circular Wt., Size, Thickness details not available
Current Location: Shri M. L. Dikshit Inter College, Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh, India.	

This particular coin is part of a hoard of 132 coins³⁶ that were found during the work of levelling of an ancient mound in the village of Korain located about nine km to the west of the district head office of Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh.³⁷ The Korain hoard has 28 Adivaraha coins, 80 Sri Vig(ra) coins and the rest of the coins are described as badly worn specimens.³⁸ On the basis of the published images of the Adivaraha coins of the Korain hoard, we may say that, with the exception of coin 1.2.6, all other coins belong to Adivaraha coins Series 1 and Series 2,³⁹ which are represented in the Korain hoard by a number of varieties, struck by different obverse and reverse dies.⁴⁰ Among the published images of the coins of the Korain hoard there are no Adivaraha coins with the reverse legend *Sri Vinayakapaladeva* that are attributed to the Pratihara king Sri Vinayakapaladeva (c. AD 931-943).⁴¹ It is, therefore, concluded that, like the coins of the Shahjahanpur hoard, the coins of the Korain hoard were also hoarded and may have been buried prior to the issue of the Adivaraha coins of Sri Vinayakapaladeva. It is interesting to note that an inscription dated AD 917, issued by the Pratihara king P-M-P Mahipaladeva, was found at the village of Asni, which is located at a distance of about 17 km north of Fatehpur.⁴² The inscription refers to a fixed donation of 500 '*rajakulasya drammas*'.⁴³ The term *rajakulasya drammas* was interpreted by John F. Fleet as 'a hereditary tax belonging to the king's household'.⁴⁴

1.3 Observations

Now we have six known 'unique' Adivaraha coins, of which three coins are from a known provenance, the village of Khutar in Shahjahanpur district, and the village of Korain in Fatehpur district, and these three coins are found among the treasure trove finds of coins. The other three coins are purchased coins of unknown provenance, one belonging to the coin cabinet of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, another to R.D. Bhatt's private collection in New Delhi, and the third coin belonging to John S. Deyell's private collection in Canada. There may be many more coins of this type in private and/or public collections that are not yet known to me, and many others that are not yet unearthed.



Two coins from the Rae Bareilly hoard and two from the Bawan hoard.
(Courtesy the State Museum, Lucknow)

It has been observed earlier in several articles of mine that the coins of the *Sri Vi*, *Sri Vig* or *Vig(ra)* and Adivaraha series were quite close to each other in time and space, as proved by hoard evidence, epigraphic records, excavated coins, and now further substantiated by the use of the proto-Nagari letter *ma* on the reverse of the *Sri Vig(ra)* series and by the 'unique' Adivaraha series of coins. The palaeography of the reverse letter *ma* in both the series belongs to the same time period. Further it may be pointed out that the palaeography of the Nagari letter *va* as inscribed in the reverse legend of some Adivaraha coins and the Nagari letter *vi* that appears on the obverse legend of some *Sri Vig(ra)* coins also look similar.⁴⁵ However, the palaeography of the word *Sri* as inscribed on *Sri Vig(ra)* coins is different and later than *Sri* as inscribed in *Sri Vi* and early Adivaraha coins.⁴⁶

The identification of the six Adivaraha coins discussed above that have a similar type of obverse but struck with different dies, and have an identical reverse proto-Nagari legend and an additional single syllable *ma* in the central part of the partial fire altar may now be described as Adivaraha coins with *ma* series. The single but 'unique' Adivaraha coin that we noticed in 1992-93 in the Heberden Coin Room of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, now becomes part of a new series of Adivaraha coins.

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- 17 I am grateful to Dr Helen Brown, who was then Assistant Keeper of Islamic and South Asian coins at the Heberden Coin Room, for the assistance provided by her in my study research. Later, she sent me photographs of all the Indo-Sasanian and Adivaraha coins of my interest with permission to publish them. For this research I received a short-term study and travel grant from the Nehru Trust for the study of UK collections. I convey my thanks to the Trustees of the Nehru Trust particularly Dr D. A. Swallow, the then Executive Trustee, who was very enthusiastic about this research project.
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- 24 I requested the Editor of the *JNSI* for permission to use this particular image.
- 25 I convey my sincere thanks to Dr John S. Deyell, who sent me the photograph and details of the this coin.
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- 34 This type of symbol is visible on some Adivaraha coins noticed in the coin hoards found in Alwar and Jaipur districts, Rajasthan.
- 35 Shrivastava (2007), p. 190, pl. VII, coin 21.
- 36 It is reported that large quantities of coins were found but only 132 coins could be recovered. *Ibid*, p. 190.
- 37 *Ibid*.
- 38 *Ibid*.
- 39 See above note 20
- 40 *Ibid*, pl. VII.
- 41 See above note 33.
- 42 *Indian Antiquary*, June 1887, pp. 173-175.
- 43 *Ibid*, pl. lines 12-13.
- 44 *Ibid*, p. 174. These terms may be interpreted as a reference to the 'privy purse' of the royal family members, meant to meet their personal expenses. The terms may also be interpreted as the *drammas* issued by the ruling Pratihara family. Indirectly the reference may indicate that coins issued by chiefs other than the Pratiharas rulers of Kanauj were also circulating in and around Asni, District Fatehpur.
- 45 Compare letter *va* of coins 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 with letter *vi* of coin 10.
- 46 Prinsep, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIV, coin 13; Bhatia (1988), p. 101; *Ibid* (1993), p. 254, pl. XIII.

SECRET MARKS ON THE COINS OF THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY

Dr Paul Stevens

Introduction

At least since the publication of Major Pridmore's work on the coins of the Indian Presidencies¹, it has been known that milled coins, both gold and silver, issued from the mints of Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca, have secret dot mint marks. Pridmore assigned the various marks to particular mints, but his reason for this assignment was somewhat tenuous and needs further exploration.

However, the presence of the secret marks is not disputed and has led the author of the current work, in discussion with others (notably Nick Rhodes and Jan Lingen), to consider whether or not secret marks may have been placed on coins issued from the various Bengal mints, before the introduction of the milled coinage. The present paper is an attempt to explore this possibility as well as an investigation of the attribution of the marks to the different mints issuing the milled coinage.

Silver Coins Issued in the Name of Alamgir II

By December of 1760 the Calcutta Council had decided that they would never succeed in getting the Kalkutta coins widely accepted into circulation and they agreed to approach the Nawab and ask for permission to strike Murshidabad rupees²:

And as we find that notwithstanding our frequent application to the Nabob concerning the want of currency of our rupees in the country from whence many inconveniencies proceed such as their being frequently refused for goods, the risk of carrying them from place to place to be exchanged (by which a boat passing from Malda to Murshudabad with 4000 Calcutta siccas for that purpose was lost in the Great River) & the loss in exchange. Those evils have never been remedy'd, the only means to effect it is to gain the Nabob's consent to our coining Muxadabad siccas in our mint in the same [way] as Arcot rupees are coined at Madras. Agreed therefore that the President endeavour to prevail on the Nabob to give his consent to our coining Murshudabad siccas in our mint.

The right to strike Murshidabad rupees was granted by the end of December 1760³:

The President acquaints the Board he has at last after much solicitation prevailed upon the Nabob to consent to our coining Murshudabad siccas in our mint... Ordered the Mint Master to prepare stamps for coining the Muxadabad rupees.

In July 1761 the Calcutta Council received notice that the Nawab had begun striking coins in the name of Shah Alam II, regnal year 2 and they agreed that coins issued from the Calcutta mint should follow suit⁴:

...The Nabob supplied him [Shah Alam] with considerable sums of money during his residence at Patna, & at the time of his departure [for Dehli] caused siccas to be struck in his name throughout these provinces of which, having advised the President, it was agreed that the siccas in the name of Shah Allum should also be struck in our mint on the fifteenth of July which was accordingly done, the usual notice being first given.

From the above disussion, it seems clear that the Calcutta mint starting producing Murshidabad rupees at the very end of 1760 or, more likely, early in 1761, before agreement was reached to produce coins in the name of Shah Alam II. During the first half of 1761, therefore, these Murshidabad rupees would have been struck in the name of Alamgir II, regnal year 6. The question is, can we differentiate those coins struck at Calcutta from those struck at Murshidabad? A typical Murshidabad sicca rupee is shown below



Murshidabad Rupee, Alamgir II RY 6

An example exists with three extra dots below the *Shah of Badshah* on the obverse, and an extra group of dots next to the star on the reverse. In an earlier paper⁵, I speculated that these dots might be a secret mark of the Calcutta mint. However, further consideration of the dates involved mean this is unlikely because the beginning of 1761 would equate to the hijri year 1174, and the coin with the extra dots clearly shows the last numeral of 1173 on the reverse.



Murshidabad Rupee, Alamgir II, RY 6. 3 dots below Shah and extra dots on reverse

However, a rupee dated 1174 has been discovered and this coin has the style of the earlier Calcutta mint coins. This coin is shown below and probably emanates from the Calcutta mint.



Fractional Rupees of Alamgir II



Quarter Rupees, Rys 2, 5 & 6

The fractional rupees (i.e. quarters and below) of Alamgir II issued from the Murshidabad or Calcutta mints cause some problems of attribution. In considering this matter, several points need to be taken into consideration.

Firstly, these coins were issued by the Nawab of Bengal from his mint of Murshidabad, with the regnal years, *inter alia*, 4, 5, & 6.



Eighth Rupees, RYs 4 & 6

Secondly, the EIC issued silver coins with the mint name Kalkutta and dates of RY 4, 5 & 6. These coins were very similar to the Murshidabad silver coins issued by the Nawab, except for the mint name. Since the mint name is almost never visible on the silver fractions, and assuming that denominations below a half rupee were issued, the problem of distinguishing between the Kalkutta and Murshidabad coins arises. Pridmore illustrates a quarter (Pr. 10) clearly showing the mint name Kalkutta. However, he also lists eighths and sixteenths (Pr 11-13) with either no illustrations, or with illustrations that do not show the mint name. These could, therefore, equally well be coins issued from the Murshidabad mint. At present, no way of attributing the coins to the two mints is known, unless the mint name is visible. Auction sale catalogues are misleading on this point. However, rupee fractions were rarely issued from the

Murshidabad mint during the preceding decades, and, although the fractions of Alamgir II (RY4,5,6) are rare, they are more common than earlier fractions. It is, therefore, likely that some, if not all, were issued from the Calcutta mint.



Sixteenth Rupee, RY 6

Thirdly, the EIC started issuing silver rupees in the name of Alamgir II, with the mint name Murshidabad, in RY 6 (see above) and it is possible that fractions were also issued. Once again, the problem of distinguishing those issued from Murshidabad from those issued at Calcutta, arises. The photos above reveal an interesting change in one of the dot patterns on the coins. The group of dots on the reverse, to the left of the numeral expressing the regnal year and above the beginning of the word *Julus*, is either a group of 5 dots or a group of three dots. Earlier years always seem to have the group of 5, but some RY 6 coins have the group of five and others the group of three. Not very many coins have yet been examined, but it is interesting to speculate that perhaps one of these groupings represents the secret mark of the Calcutta mint, for RY 6 coins struck with the mint name Murshidabad. If this were true, then the coins with the three dots would be a likely candidate for Calcutta, because Murshidabad coins were only issued from Calcutta in that year. However, the different dots also occur on the rupees (see above), but the hijri date visible on the rupee with three dots, shown above, seems to be 1173, which is too early for the Calcutta mint to have begun striking Murshidabad silver. Since the dies for the rupees also seem to have been used for the fractions, it seems unlikely that these dots indicate different mints. Coins with RY 6 were issued for some time after Alamgir's death so perhaps the change in dot markings has something to do with this, rather than indicating different mints.

Silver Coins 1761-1764

In December 1762, the Calcutta Council was informed that the Nawab had started striking four sun siccas in his mints of Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca, and the Calcutta authorities decided that the three sun siccas in the treasury there, should be sent to the mint for re-stamping as four sun siccas and that from 1st February, all new coins would show the fourth regnal year⁵⁴. Before this work was started, the Council reconsidered the practice of re-stamping coins and it is clear from the entry in the records that up until that time the practice had been to actually re-stamp the old coins i.e. use the old coins as blanks. This caused the coins to have a larger diameter and to be thinner than those struck at the Murshidabad mint. They could, therefore, be easily recognised as Calcutta mint issues, and were not so easily passed in currency. It was, therefore, agreed that henceforth the coins should be re-coined, i.e. melted down and then re-coined⁵⁵:

The Board now taking into consideration the practice of re-stamping rupees in the Company's mint, and the many complaints made thro- out the country regarding the Calcutta Siccas, apparently owing to the custom of re-stamping, which as it draws the rupee broader & thinner & leaves the stamp less perfect & distinct, renders it very [easy to] distinguish them from the rupees struck at Moorshedabad, & obstruct their currency – think proper to prevent in future the many bad effects, which arise therefrom, to call upon the Mint Master's opinion concerning the expense of recoining siccas...

It is therefore agreed to abolish the custom of re-stamping & instead thereof to recoin in the mint all rupees of the sicca standard at the rate of 2 ¼ per cent – whereby there accruing a profit of 14 annas Ordered that eight annas thereof (the same sum that was gained by re-stamping) be paid to the Company – and the remaining six annas to the Mint Master

Several times in this paper the problem of distinguishing those rupees struck at Calcutta from those struck at Murshidabad has been

discussed. The above archival extract appears to offer a possible means of arriving at the answer to this question, at least for coins dated regnal year 2 of Shah Alam II. Specimens that are thinner and of greater diameter are likely to be from the Calcutta mint and may help substantiate or refute a hypothesis advanced by Nick Rhodes (personal communication). He has found that coins of the early years of Shah Alam II might have been marked with different groups of dots and it is possible that these represent the different mints.



Rupee of Shah Alam II, RY 3



Rupee of Shah Alam II, RY 4



Rupee of Shah Alam II, RY 5

The three pictures above show that different coins have different dot arrangements in the top line of the obverse. The first has two dots to the right and three to the left, the second has two dots to the right and two to the left, and the third has three dots to the right and two to the left. The full set of information discovered so far is given in the following table:

Regnal year 2	2 dots right	3 dots left
Regnal year 3	2 dots right	2 or 3 dots left
Regnal year 4	2 dots right	2 or 3 dots left
Regnal year 5 and later	3 dots right	2 dots left

Regnal years 3 & 4, at least, have two sets of patterns, though which might represent which mint (if any) is not known. More information is required to help address this issue.

Silver Coins 1771 to 1773

The decision to standardise the coins of all four mints had been discussed since regnal year 10 of Shah Alam II, and was finally implemented in regnal years 11 & 12. Sometime in regnal year 11, all four mints started producing identical coins as far as was possible. Of course, die production was not centralised, so there were bound to be minor differences but this was not the only major worry at that time. The authorities were also worried that the different mints might produce lightweight or low fineness coins, and since the coins were supposed to be identical, the mint responsible would not be identifiable. Once the milled coinage was begun in the 1790s, a decision was taken to add secret marks to the coins to address this problem (see below). It is interesting to speculate that the authorities may have taken this approach with the earlier coins of RY 11 and 12,

although no archival evidence has been found to support this idea. However examination of a number of coins has revealed the following observation (thanks to Jan Lingen and Nick Rhodes who helped with this study):



4 dots in L of Fazl



3 dots above J of Julus

RY	AH	Status	Obv Symbol	L of Fazl	above Julus
2			Sun	3?	3
				5	3
3	1176			5	3
4		Nazarana		5	3
5	1178			5	3
	1179			5	3
7	1179			5	3
7	1180			5	3
8	1181			5	3
9	1182			5	3
10		Nazarana		5	3
10	1183		Crescent	5	3
11	1184			5	0
				4	3
11	1185			5	0
				5	3
				4	3
11	1187?			4	3
12	1165			4	3
12	1185			4	3
12	1186			5	0
				5	3
12	1187			5	0
12	Not clear			5	0
				4	3
13	1185	Nazarana		4	3
15	1188	Nazarana		4	3
15	1189			4	3
	1190			4	3
19	all			4	3

From RY 2 to RY 10 the dot groupings are pretty well all 5/3. Suddenly in RY 11 this changes and we get three combinations, 5/0, 4/3 and 5/3. Then after RY 12 everything becomes 4/3. We know that from year 2 until RY 10, only Murshidabad and Calcutta were striking the Murshidabad Siccas.

Similarly in RY 15 both these mints were striking these rupees, Patna and Dacca having been closed. After that, only Calcutta struck the coins.

It is therefore tempting to draw the conclusion that Calcutta and Murshidabad both used the same combinations, initially 5/3, and later 4/3. In Rys 11 and 12, when we know that all four mints were operating and supposedly striking identical coins, we could assign the 5/0 dots and 5/3 to Patna and Dacca, though which might be which is not clear. This is complicated by the fact that there are also other dot groupings that may need to be taken into account, particularly the group that sometimes appears next to the regnal year on the reverse.

The Milled Coinage

In 1789, a major report about the coinage of the Bengal Presidency concluded that the problems of *batta* as well as counterfeiting, filing, drilling etc, could be overcome by the introduction of coin production using the 'European' method. John Prinsep, of course, had already done this earlier in the 1780s, but most of his machinery and skilled employees had been rejected by the Calcutta authorities and by 1790 little capability was available in the Calcutta mint to achieve the stated objective. Fortunately, the Calcutta Mint Master had employed Prinsep's foreman and his assistant, the latter of whom was to make a significant contribution to the construction and operation of the new mint. The new coinage was to be produced in the mints of Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna and Dacca. Milled gold coins were produced reasonably quickly, but milled silver coins proved more difficult and were not produced in Calcutta until 1793. Even then, the production of silver blanks continued to be undertaken manually and it was not until 1802 that this part of the process was automated. Before 1793, the Calcutta mint produced silver rupees struck with a fly-press but on blanks that were smaller than the dies. I have named these '1205 dump rupees' for the purpose of this paper.

The new mint at Dacca was the first of the subsidiary mints to be opened in late 1791, but did not immediately start producing milled coins. Although the records are not specific on the point, it is likely that the Dacca mint started operations by producing the 1205 dump rupees. The records are clear, however, that Dacca did not begin striking milled coins until 1794.

Mints were opened in Murshidabad and Patna at the very end of 1792 and the beginning of 1793 respectively. It is likely, for various reasons, that these two mints immediately began production of milled rupees.

There was, therefore, a period of several months during the second half of 1793 and the early months of 1794, when the three mints of Calcutta, Murshidabad and Patna were all issuing milled rupees, whilst Dacca apparently continued to issue the 1205 dump rupees.

The Coins and the Secret Marks

Three types of milled rupee were issued during the early 1790s. One with a broad rim and slightly larger flan (Pr 153), and this type need not concern us for the purposes of this discussion. The two other types are illustrated above. One has the Hijri date of 1202, but later it was decided to remove this date and just leave the fixed regnal year 19 on the reverse. Coins with the Hijri year 1202 are found with three of the secret marks, whilst the later coins, without the Hijri year, are found with all four marks.



Hijri date 1202



no Hijri date

We also know that a major shipment of dies was sent to the three subsidiary mints in about December 1793. It seems reasonable to assume that these were the dies for the new rupees, without the hijri date.

These events are illustrated in the figure (overview of key events) on page 48, below.

For the rupees and mohurs, Pridmore identified secret marks as a tiny dot in the centre of one of the three circles of dots found on the obverse of the coins:



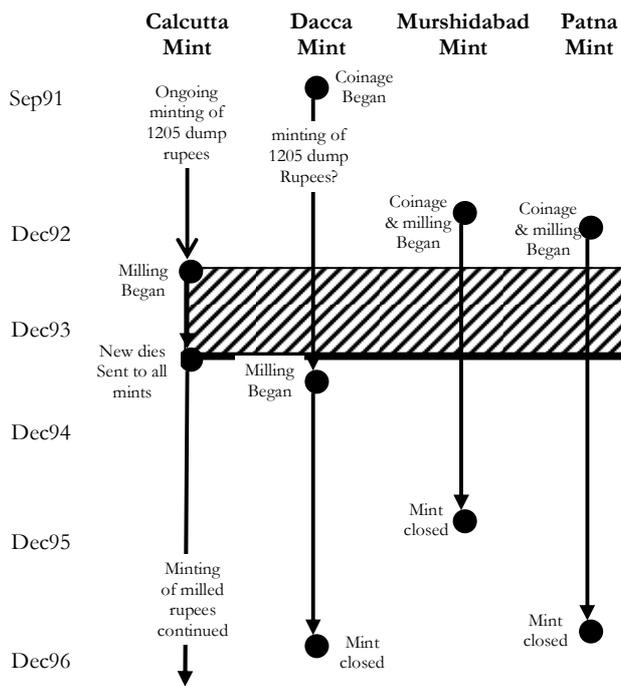
Secret marks. Dot in right-hand circle

He assigned coins with no dot to Calcutta, but he stated that Calcutta had an extra tiny dot in the top line (see below), coins with a tiny dot in the right-hand circle to Dacca (as shown above), those with the dot in the centre circle to Murshidabad, and those with the dot in the left-hand circle, to Patna. He stated that this attribution was not confirmed, and was simply based on the dates that the mints started production: Calcutta first, then Dacca, Murshidabad and Patna respectively. Using this logic, Pridmore assumed that the secret mark missing on the earlier of the two types, was that of Patna. The missing mark is the dot in the left-hand circle. However, the flaw in this argument is that although the Dacca mint started production before the other subsidiary mints, it did not start striking *milled* coins until after Murshidabad and Patna - in fact, after March 1794 (see discussion above). The missing mint mark, dot in left-hand circle, must, therefore, belong to Dacca.

Distinguishing between the other marks is not possible at present, and it seems reasonable to continue to follow Pridmore's attribution for Murshidabad (i.e.) dot in centre circle, which leaves Patna with a dot in the right-hand circle.

The Calcutta Mint Mark

Pridmore also attributed coins with a tiny extra dot above the two dots in the top line, to Calcutta. However this tiny dot also occurs on coins with the Patna mark, at least. There also exist coins with no dot in the centre of the three circles and no tiny dot in the top line. The dot is also sometimes absent in later series, which were only struck at the Calcutta mint. It, therefore, seems safer to assume the Calcutta mark is simply the absence of dots in the centre of the three circles. The tiny dot in the top line may be of no significance.



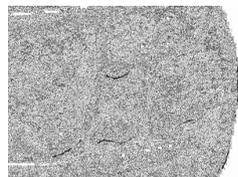
Overview of Key Events



No dot
Calcutta



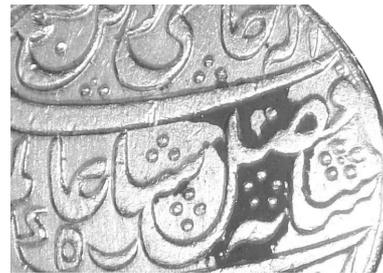
Dot in right-hand circle –
Patna



Dot in centre circle
Murshidabad



Dot in left-hand circle –
Dacca



Dot in right-hand circle (for Patna) plus tiny dot in top line

Pridmore also identified different marks on the smaller denominations of coins, but no further comments on his attributions of these marks to the different mints are possible with the information currently available. The hidden dots on these smaller denominations appear in the three dot groups on the reverse around the beginning of the mint name.



Calcutta – Dot in 2nd
circle



Calcutta or Patna – Dot in 2nd
and 3rd circle



Dacca – Dot in first
circle



Murshidabad – No dot

References

- 1 Pridmore F (1975), *The Coins of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Part 4 India*, Volume 1, East India Company Presidency Series, Spink & Son Ltd.
- 2 Bengal Public Consultations. IOR P/1/32, p712. 25th November 1760
- 3 Bengal Public Consultations. IOR P/1/32, p846. 31st December 1760
- 4 Sethi RR (Ed) (1968), *Fort William-India House Correspondence, Vol III (1760-63)*, Government of India p359. Letter from Bengal to Court, dated 12th November 1761.
- 5 Stevens PJE (2008), *JONS* 197 pp37-47

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