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October - November 1985

From the Secretary General

Every six years the International Numismatic Commission (CIN) holds an International Congress. In 1979 it was in Berne and in 1986, on the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Numismatic Society, the 10th Congress will be held in London, at the Institute of Education between 8th and 12th September. A copy of an advance notification and 'call for papers' has already been circulated to members. At present the programme for the Congress is still being finalised. If you were considering presenting a written paper, please write now to Dr. Carradice at the British Museum, London WC1 with an outline or abstract.

ONS is one of the two International members of CIN. We support its aim of facilitating co-operation between numismatic scholars in different countries (which is very similar to our own). Every year we scrape together the subscription from our sparse funds, thereby incurring the annual strictures of our Treasurer. Next year we look forward to taking part in the world's major numismatic event at which 500/700 are expected. For ONS members we are planning two special informal workshops as part of the Congress at which members from different parts of the world can discuss the new studies and discoveries in their countries. One meeting will focus on Islamic topics and the other on the Far East and SE Asia. If there is enough support it may be possible to organise a meeting devoted to Indian studies.

The 1986 Congress promises to be an interesting chance to meet many of the major numismatists from around the world. Please put the dates in your diary and come if you can. If you would be interested in attending one of the ONS informal workshops, please advise your Regional Secretary. If you have some new discovery or study that you would like to present to the meeting for 10-15 minutes, please write to me with details.

Michael Broome

Obituary

It is with regret that we report the death on 12th June last, after a very short illness, of Mr John Gilbert of Wansford, Northants. John retired from his post as a botanist at Kew Gardens in 1980. He was a keen numismatist and was well known in his home district as an antiquarian, local historian and naturalist.

MISCELLANY

ONS accounts

The Society's audited income and expenditure account for the year ending 31 March 1985 is now available. Members wishing to have a copy should write to their Regional Secretary.

Future ONS Meeting

The American region will hold its annual meeting during the New York International Numismatic Convention on 30th November at 6.00 pm in the Monarch Suite of the Sheraton Centre Hotel. All ONS members visiting the convention are invited to attend the meeting and the usual dinner held afterwards at an oriental restaurant. Members are welcome to bring guests or members of their family. The guest speaker will be Fred Shore who will talk on Parthian Coinage with slide illustrations of rarities in his outstanding collection.

Indian Conference

The Numismatic Society of India will be holding its 73rd annual conference in Dharwar on 5th-7th November 1985. For further information, please contact Mr T P Verma, Joint-Secretary, Numismatic Society of India, PO Hindu University, Varanasi 221 005, India.

Coinage of Eastern Turkestan

Dr T D Yih (Dr. Kanterslaan 298, 5361 NM Grave, The Netherlands) would like to know whether any member has coins of the later Chagatids and Khojas in Eastern Turkestan. To help identify any such coins, Dr Yih has provided the following historical sketch and genealogical table:-

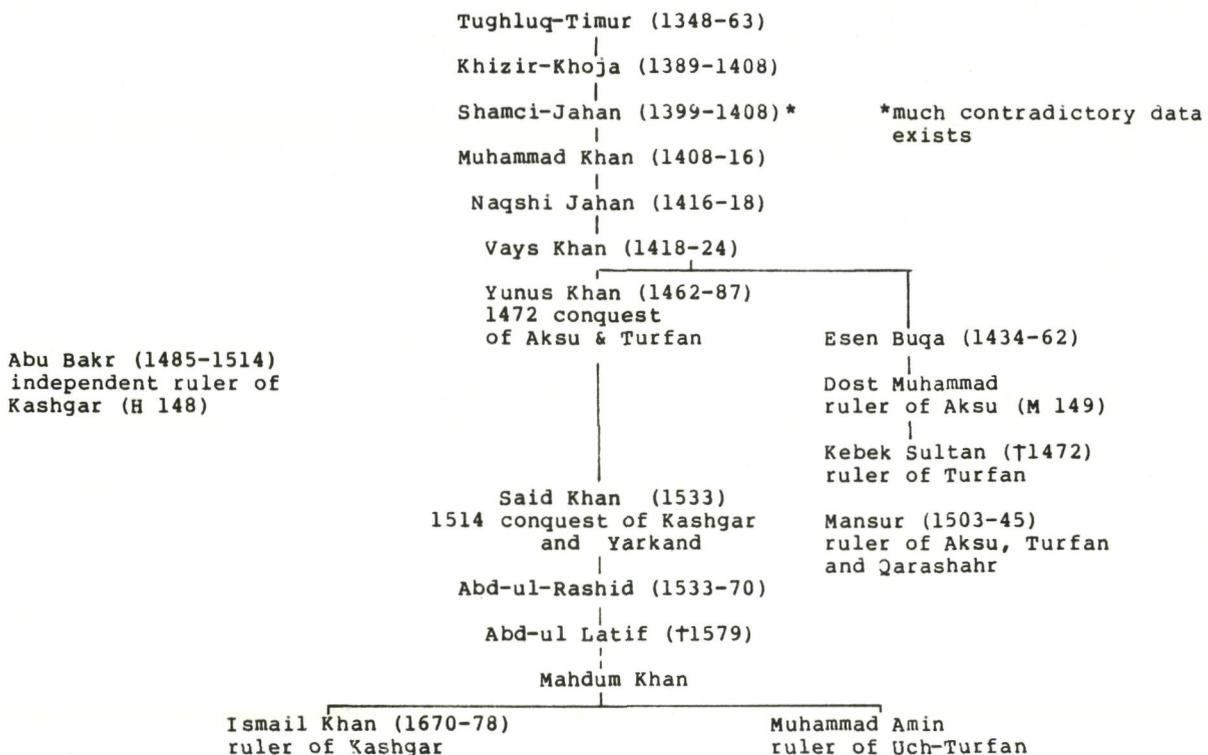
After the death of Kebek in 1326 the Chagatid territory was divided into a western part (Mawarannahr) and an eastern part (Moghulistan) including the Kashgar region.

Tugluq-Timur (†1363), grandson of Tuwa became ruler of eastern Turkestan in 1348 with the help of amir Puladchi (†1360), the ruler of the Kashgar-Kucha region. (This amir is reported to have issued coins at Almaliq (B2 163)). Tugluq-Timur made Aksu and later Kashgar his residence (H 146). The Chagatid line was maintained at least nominally until Ismail Khan (1670-85), the last Chagatid ruler of Kashgar, was driven from Kashgar in 1678 by Khoja Hidayattullah (Appaq-Khoja, 1678-93), with the help of the Kalmuks (BH 15). The Khoja family maintained power in the various cities of eastern Turkestan until the conquest by the Chinese in 1758.

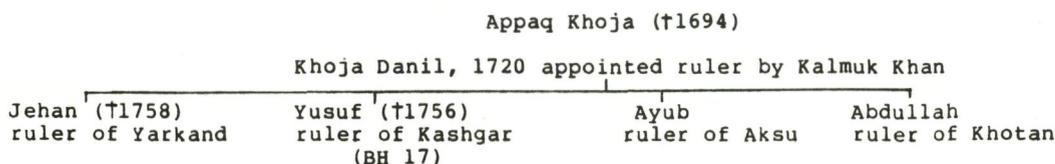
References:

- B2 BARTHOLD, V (1945) Histoire des Turcs d'Asie centrale
BH BAYMIRZA Hayit (1971) Turkestan zwischen Russland und China
H HAMBLY, G (1966) Fischer Weltgeschichte 16 Zentralasien
M MINORSKI (1956) ed. V Barthold Four studies on the history of Central Asia

Genealogy of Chagatid rulers in eastern Turkestan (Moghulistan)



Khoja family



New Publications

Volume V of the Journal of the Academy of Indian Numismatics and Sigillography is now available (as are previous volumes) from Dr S K Bhatt, 115 Kailash Park, Manorama Ganj, Indore 452001, India. Volume V contains 17 articles in all covering Indo-Greek, Satavahana and other ancient series; coinage in 16th/17th century portuguese India; Malwa and Moghal coinage; coins of Dhar State. Members interested in the copper coinage of the Princely States will find a number of well-illustrated articles in these volumes on Dhar, Ratlam and Jhabua copper coins, many of which have not been published anywhere else.

ONS member Ranko Mandic has recently produced a "Catalogue of Coins 1868-1984: Serbia-Montenegro-Occupation Issues - Yugoslavia". This 112 page book, written in Serbo-Croat, includes rare patterns, and valuations are given in three grades. Further information is available from the publishers, Jugoslavika Moderna, Belgrade, or from the author (Valentina - Flat 96, 5 N. Gamadia Road, Bombay 400026, India.

Book review

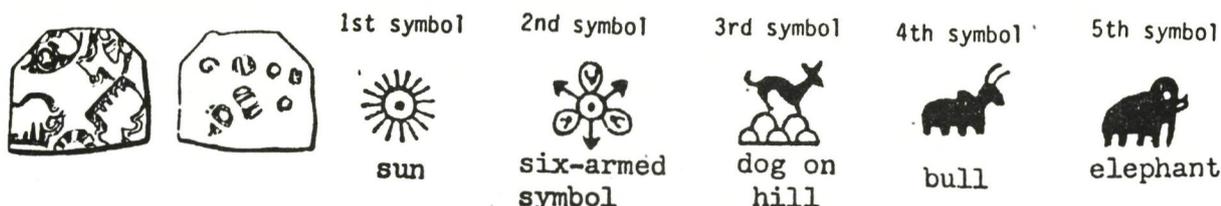
P L Gupta & T R Hardaker, Ancient Indian Silver Punchmarked Coins of the Magadha-Maurya Karshapana Series, 112 pp plus 8 plates: including listing of over 600 coin types and their symbols, all clearly represented by accurate drawings, laid out in table form. Thread sewn binding with laminated card cover. Published by the Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, P.O. Anjaneri, Dist. Nasik - 422 213, Maharashtra, India, as Monograph No. 1. Price £12, US\$ 15, Rs.150.

This book should be welcomed with a sense of relief as well as pleasure. The authority of the authors on the Magadha-Maurya series of punchmarked coins is widely acknowledged, and the arrival of this long awaited volume from the publishers finally dispels fears that the fruits of their labours might never become generally available.

The monograph catalogues the extensive series of silver punchmarked coins bearing five obverse marks which circulated in Ancient India. Almost 500 different punchmarks are listed, and tables show how these marks were associated to produce more than 600 different coin types known to the authors. The coin types and individual marks are beautifully illustrated in a series of tables which are well cross-referenced. Advice is given on how to identify the coins using the tables, and an ample selection of the coins are illustrated in the 8 excellent plates at the rear. The book will undoubtedly form the cornerstone of future research into the series, and will be a valuable tool in the hands of the numismatist and archaeologist.

The authors also present a summary of their views on the issuers of the coinage, its chronology, and the interpretation of the symbols. The coins are divided into 7 classes, chiefly on consideration of their fabric and style, each of which follows on, more or less, from the previous. The earliest coins, of period I, are attributed to the state of Magadha during the 5th century BC; the more abundant coins of later classes chronicle the rise of the Magadhan state under the Nandas and Mauryas into an empire encompassing the whole of N. India. The period of debasement which terminates the series is placed in the first half of the 2nd century BC, under the late Mauryas or Sungas. This chronology is plausibly argued on the basis of the few historical records available, and the evidence of the coins themselves. The authors offer it only as a hypothesis, and indeed it has been criticised recently by Cribb (JNSI 1983) who suggests a later commencement date for the series. At present neither viewpoint can be conclusively accepted or rejected.

A TYPICAL MAGADHAN COIN



With regard to the interpretation of the symbols, the authors attempt to introduce the idea of five separate functions denoted by the five obverse punchmarks. This five function hypothesis is defended by a demonstration that it is possible to arrange the symbols so that, by and large, particular marks only ever appear in one 'position' or function, although a few exceptions to this rule are considered. The 'first' mark is almost invariably the sun symbol, taken to imply something like 'the permanence of the Magadhan empire'. The function of the 'second' mark, almost invariably a variety of the 6-arm symbol, is not interpreted, but arguments against it being the mark of the emperor, or any other personal badge of office are advanced. It will be recalled that during the '70s Mitchiner suggested that the varieties of the 6-arm symbol represented mint marks: this view is also rejected. The arrangement of the coins arrived at by Mitchiner was greatly influenced by this mint mark hypothesis, to the extent that it is very difficult to use his tables to consider any other interpretation of the symbols. This difficulty is avoided by the Gupta-Hardaker text and is a further reason to recommend this work as the basic text on the series.

The 'third' and 'fourth' marks are suggested by the authors to be perhaps the signatures of government or mint officials, on the basis of the number of them which appear, and their normal life expectancy. The 'fifth' mark or function includes the greatest variety of symbols, but also includes a number of symbols which seem to recur again and again, throughout the series; such symbols as the elephant, or the 'scorpion'. It is tentatively suggested that these fifth marks may represent some kind of mint mark.

I wish to take this opportunity to examine the authors' interpretation of the 'fifth' mark more closely, and to advance what I think is a more plausible interpretation. The authors suggest (p.18) "The meaning of the fifth mark evidently relates to some phenomenon... equally expressed by marks of great continuity as well as extreme brevity of lifespan. This would seem to narrow the field to some kind of mint mark or metallic guarantee." I do not understand what is meant by the term 'metallic guarantee' in this extract. The possibility that the mark indicated the mine or bullion source from which the silver derived is ruled out by the authors (p.15). Equally the suggestion that the fifth mark

indicated the mint, at least in any straightforward sense, is unlikely. Firstly it requires us to assume a great number of mints operating even during period I, when the empire was at its most limited extent, and secondly we have to postulate a large number of mints which opened merely to strike a single coin type. Even if these difficulties are overcome, the text itself provides a further more damning objection. On page 5 an argument is developed suggesting that the coins of series I are struck in the Magadhan homeland, whilst the coins of series II were struck in a separate new province "area A". As the marks which appear in the 5th position in coins of series II are all found also in the fifth position in series I, supposedly a different province, this is incompatible with the fifth mark being a mint mark at all, on the authors' own evidence.

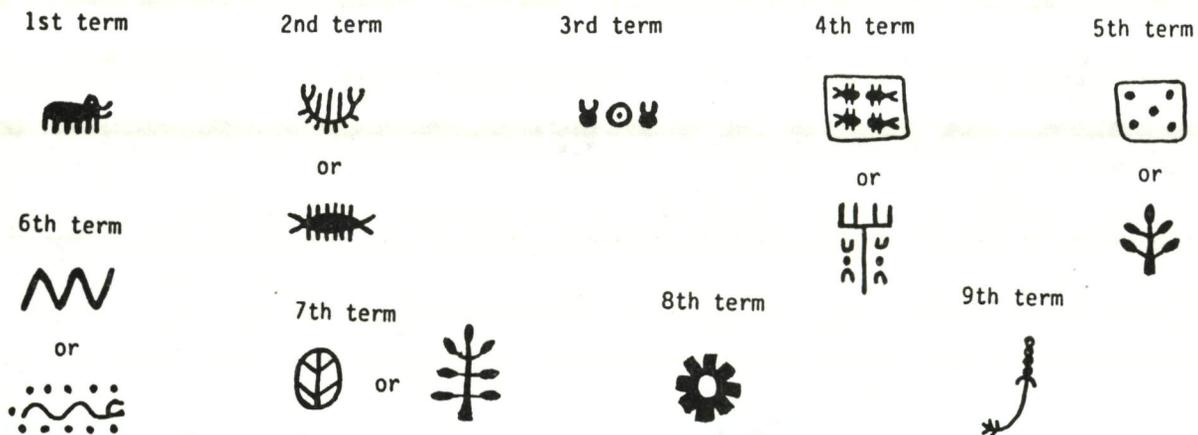
I suggest that the most plausible interpretation of the fifth mark is a chronological one. Assume that the fifth mark was changed annually, or possibly after some other regular period of time. This might indicate a new regnal year, or era, of the emperor, but is more likely to signal a further term of office of a government or mint official. Suppose that in principle the selection of a new mark to indicate the new term of office was arbitrary, but that in practice certain marks became traditionally associated with certain terms. The pattern of fifth marks generated by these assumptions would closely resemble that actually found on the coins. For instance the elephant mark (mark 1) might indicate the first term of office, the 'scorpion' (marks 3 and 32) the second, the 'bull's eye and taurines' (mark 2) the third, and so on. Many fifth symbols occur only once in the series, but this can be accommodated by the hypothesis. Symbols representing say the 10th, 11th or 12th period of office would be required only occasionally by long-serving officers, and so the tradition for selecting them would not become well established. Further, after a long period in office, vanity might prompt an official to personalise his term of office marks.

Gupta and Hardaker suggest that "one of the most puzzling aspects of the fifth mark is that only three are used in series II, all three being long-life types". This puzzle is straightforwardly solved by the present hypothesis - new officials were appointed to oversee the production of series II, a scarce series of coins whose issue was terminated during their third term of office.

One possible objection to this term-of-office thesis springs to mind; certain coin types, such as 416 and 574, are very common, and it might be thought difficult to fit their production into a limited period. It should be remembered however that in other coin series periods of very high mint activity, even restricted to one year, are not at all uncommon. Also during the period of production of type 574 a phase of debasement is clearly under way. During a phase of debasement authorities have an obvious motive to preserve their coin types, as seen in many other series (for an extended discussion of this phenomenon in medieval Europe see Bisson, 'The Conservation of Coinage', 1979).

The coins of say class III x A form an excellent paradigm for the terms-of-office hypothesis representing how the 'rhinoceros' and 'fish in tank' officials produced a succession of related coins over a period of time involving at least 8 terms of office. In order to illustrate this suggestion more clearly, I include a first stab at identifying the marks associated with (but not exclusively representing) the series of terms of office. In constructing this I have taken into account the frequency of occurrence of the symbols, and in some cases their tendency to connote a particular number.

Some Fifth Marks Possibly Associated with (but not exclusively representing) Terms of Office or Regnal Years



The Magadhan/Mauryan punchmarked karshapanas are an important series of coins, representing the earliest successful attempt by any bureaucratic empire to set up an integrated coinage system. As such they have been badly neglected by numismatists in the past; even in such a recent authoritative work as 'Coins', edited by M J Price, published in association with the British Museum Publications Ltd. (1980), the treatment of the series is woefully inadequate. The authors are therefore even more to be congratulated for their important work on the series, and I recommend anyone at all interested in these coins to buy a copy.

Robert Tye