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November - December 1986

NEWSLETTER no. 103



*Dr. H. J. van der Wiel (far left) with Prince Bernhard and Princess Juliana (centre), and the other distinguished recipients of the 1986 Silver Carnation awards.
(Photo: Martin Droog, Goudsche Courant)*

Royal Award for Dr. H. J. van der Wiel

Friday 27th June 1986 was a royal day for Dr. van der Wiel, the ONS secretary for continental Europe. For it was on that day at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam that he was presented with the award of the Silver Carnation by His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. This award is given by the Prince Bernhard Fund, the major cultural fund in the Netherlands, and is bestowed upon those who perform meritorious service to culture and the arts beyond the call of their own professions.

Over the years, Dr. van der Wiel, who is a neurologist by profession, has used his extensive knowledge of numismatics to publish a number of pioneering studies. He has also done much to bring numismatics to a much wider circle of people through lectures and well-written articles. It is the first time that this royal award has been given for work in the field of numismatics and is recognition of the fact that numismatics is not merely a matter of money and investment but is of considerable cultural and historical value.

The actual award received by Dr. van der Wiel and three others on this occasion consists of an emblem of a five-petalled rose (symbol of the house of Lippe) in silver and red enamel, wherein is shown a stylised, crowned silver carnation above the letter B. There is also a short Latin text.

I should like to take this opportunity on behalf of the ONS to extend our heartiest congratulations to Dr. van der Wiel on this splendid and well-deserved honour for services to numismatics.

Jan Lingen

10th International Numismatic Congress ONS Workshop – South Asia

On Thursday 11 September some 30-40 congress participants crowded into a room on the eighth floor of the congress centre to talk about developments, research and activity in South Asian numismatics. Chaired in his usual efficient and courteous manner by Mr. W. F. Spengler, the well-known authority on Ghorid and Ghaznavid coinage, the session got underway with a series of interesting reports on what was going on in India. Professor P. Bhatia said that all three universities in Delhi ran courses in numismatics, with two of them having professional chairs in the subject. She herself had recently completed a Numismatic Atlas of Ancient India, which was due for publication in the near future, while a colleague at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi was using numismatics as a source of economic history. A work had been published detailing the coin hoards in the Lucknow Museum and a similar project was underway at the Jaipur Museum. Professor L. K. Tripathi of Banaras Hindu University mentioned work that was going on at a number of other Universities, including Banaras (which had for many years played an important role in numismatic studies), Calcutta, Gorakhpur, Sagar, Nagpur, Lucknow, Mysore and universities in Bihar. He also gave information on a number of museum projects, and the Numismatic Society of India.

Professor Upendra Thakur of Magadh University, Bihar, confirmed Professor Tripathi's view that at most universities in India there were staff engaged in teaching ancient Indian history and culture including numismatics. He himself had produced a book on mints and minting in India. At the Patna Museum and three other museums in Bihar the coin holdings were being catalogued. Dr. Nisar Ahmed talked briefly about the numismatic studies undertaken at the Banaras Hindu University and about his own recent and current work, e.g. the metallurgy of punch-marked coins, trade routes in ancient times, local and tribal coins, and a current work on the Gupta dynasty.

Dr. P. L. Gupta, on the other hand, lamented the fact that the coin collections at many museums in India were kept behind locked doors and were often inaccessible to scholars. It was partly for this reason that the Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies had been set up in Nasik and had embarked on a project to build up a comprehensive library and photographic record of as many coins as possible in museums and private collections. To date photographs of some 80,000 coins had been taken and put on cardex forms, including those at Patna and Patiala Museums. Certain other museums, however, had been very reluctant to cooperate. Dr. Gupta added that the Institute continued to publish the Numismatic Digest (formerly published by the now defunct Numismatic Society of Bombay), and had published the monograph on Silver Punch-marked coins of the Magadha-Maurya Karshapana Series co-authored by himself and Mr. Hardaker. It was hoped to publish a similar monograph on earlier punchmarked coins sometime next year, as well as a book on Maratha Coinage by Ken Wiggins and K. K. Maheshwari. Western scholars and institutions were becoming more interested in the Nasik Institute especially when they realised that, for example, much useful information on Roman coin finds and hoards in India could be obtained. Dr. Gupta ended by praising the ONS for much useful work in publishing information about Indian Islamic and State coins.

Dr. S. K. Bhatt talked about the activities of the Academy of Indian Numismatics and Sigillography which he directs at Indore and formally presented Mr. Broome, General Secretary of the ONS, with volume VI of the Academy's Journal, to mark its release. Dr. Bhatt mentioned three projects that were currently underway; his own corpus of the coins of the Sultans of Mandu; a corpus of Moghal coins being undertaken by Mr. D. L. Johri; and a study of 30,000 Ujjaini copper coins by Mr. R. K. Sethi. A special edition of the Academy's Journal would also be issued to honour Professor Ajaymitra Shastri.

Professor Y. B. Singh of the University of Jammu mentioned the considerable coin collection of the Pratap Singh Museum in Srinagar, Kashmir and invited scholars to visit the museum and assist in the cataloguing of the coins (which incidentally are due to be photographed by the Nasik Institute in the not too distant future).

Dr. S. Gokhale mentioned her work on Satavahana coinage and some important discoveries, e.g. a coin of King Hala and a new coin type of Castana.

Lastly, from the Indian side, Mr. P. Kulkarni of Nagpur mentioned the growing number of numismatic societies in India. His own local society in Nagpur, for example, had over 200 members. He himself was currently working on a book on the coinage of the Bhonslas of Nagpur and Orissa.

Mr. Y. Qureishi, from Karachi, told the gathering about the recent formation of the Numismatic Society of Pakistan and the existence of important coin collections in the Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi Museums. Mr. O. Boparachchi, a Sri Lankan scholar, currently working in Paris, told of his dissertation research on Indo-Greek coinage and of his plan to return to Sri Lanka next year to work on the large number of Roman coins found in that country.

Some European activity was reported by Messrs. Cribb, Hennequin, Broome and Dr. MacDowall. Mr. Cribb said that he had been engaged on various Indian topics. Apart from his special interest in the Kushans, he was embarking on two specific projects; one devoted to the coinage of Castana, and the other on Kushano-Sassanian coinage. He had also completed a paper on the iconography of Kushan coinage. Anyone interested in studying the British Museum's collection at a distance could purchase photographs of any desired series (details from Mr. Cribb at the British Museum, coin and medal department!) Monsieur Hennequin said that he was currently cataloguing the coin collection of the Paris Mint, which had a certain number of South Asian coins; and that Mr. Klaus Rotzer, a member of the French Numismatic Research Group, was working on the Islamic coinage of India. Mr. Broome mentioned that Mr. John Nesbitt was studying the magnetic qualities of Kushan copper coins, while Dr. MacDowall reported that the British Society for South Asian Studies (formerly the Society for Afghan Studies) had been given permission by the Indian Government to excavate at Sannati, Gulbarga district in Karnataka. It was planned to set up an Indian Numismatics sub-group of the Society to cover Indian Numismatics.

Finally, Dr. Bates, Curator of Islamic coins at the American Numismatic Society, pointed out that the ANS had one of the largest and least known of all coin collections, including about 30,000 South Asian coins. Work was going on to computerise the whole collection – as far as South Asian coins were concerned, the coins of the Sultans of Delhi and Bengal had been completed and the Moghals started. The computerised catalogue of any series could be purchased, when ready (details from Dr. Bates) and visiting experts were welcome to assist in editing the catalogues. Dr. Bates also described the ANS's Islamic and South Asian photofile, previously mentioned in ONS Newsletter No. 99.

There was unfortunately insufficient time for other distinguished participants to report on their activities but it was generally agreed that the amount of activity going on in the field of South Asian coinage was very encouraging. Dr. Bates, speaking on behalf of the Bureau of the International Numismatic Commission, was especially heartened by the presence of so many South Asian specialists and thanked them for participating in the congress.

Recent & Forthcoming Publications

1. Saran Singh's comprehensive Encyclopaedia of the Coins of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei 1400-1986, has now been published. Orders may be placed with The Editor, Malaysia Numismatic Society, GPO Box 12367, 50776 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The price is M\$ 67 per copy plus postage (sea mail to Australia - M\$17, to England - M\$24.50, to USA and Canada - M\$22, in each case per copy). It is hoped to review this work in a future Newsletter.
2. As mentioned above, Volume VI of the Journal of the Academy of Indian Numismatics and Sigillography is now available. This contains a variety of articles on ancient Indian numismatics. A few copies are available from the Editor at £5 plus postage, otherwise from the Academy (115 Kailash Park, Manorama Ganj, Indore 452001, Indore).
3. Michael Robinson has just published a new book entitled The Lead and Tin Coins of Pegu & Tenasserim. The book is A4 size, v plus 83 pages, and has 23 plates of over 200 coins, most of which have never been published before. A very limited edition. Price £29.50 plus postage (£2). The book is available from Dr. Robinson,
Also available are the following titles:

The Coins & Banknotes of Burma by M. Robinson and L. A. Shaw, 1980. £15 plus postage (£1.50).

Arakanese Coins by San Tha Aung, 1979, translated by Aye Set, transcribed by M. Robinson, 1982. £10.50 plus postage (£1.50).

The Die Varieties of 19th Century Burmese Copper Coins by M. Robinson and L. A. Shaw, 1984. £5 plus postage (£0.50).

4. An article entitled Dating India's Earliest Coins by Joe Cribb has been published by the Instituto Universitario Orientale in Naples, in a volume entitled South Asian Archaeology 1983.
5. Nicholas Rhodes has prepared a paper on the coinage of Kachar, for publication in the Numismatic Chronicle later this year.
6. Spinks have published a Catalogue of British Colonial and Commonwealth Coins by A. P. de Clermont and J. Wheeler. With over 700 pages and thousands of illustrations, this book "is intended to be the standard catalogue and reference work for the collector and dealer alike". The authors have examined "all major sales from the turn of the century to the present day" as part of the process of producing the price guide, and have endeavoured to emphasise the importance of rarity, availability and condition. The price is £22.50 plus postage (£2) and the book is available from Spink & Son Ltd., 5, 6 & 7 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QS.
Spink's Circular for October 1986 contains two items of potential interest for ONS members, viz.
 - a) Ousanas I - Ousanas II: Further evidence for the chronological sequence of some early Aksumite coins by B. Juel-Jensen.
 - b) An unpublished Sao-Tome of D. Filipe III by F. Rebello.

Erratum

Ken Mackenzie has pointed out an error that crept into his article on the square akces of Tunis in Newsletter 97. The beginning of the last line of the fourth paragraph should read 1012 - 1026H inclusive and not 1012 - 1016.

Sikandar Shah

The next two coins in the British Museum Catalogue are a silver and a copper coin in the name of Sikandar Shah, attributed to the period 1386-1410. The same attribution has been followed by all subsequent authors, including Valentine, who listed 3 copper coins, and Stephen Album, who illustrated a gold coin in his list No. 21 (May 1981), as well as silver and copper specimens in later lists. The attribution of these coins to such an early period is put into question when the following three coins are examined:—



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

It can immediately be seen that all three pieces are struck from the same reverse die, whereas the obverses are in the names of Sikandar Shah, Fath Shah and Muhammad Shah respectively. Now there was only one Sultan of Kashmir called Fath Shah, and he ruled twice, 1487-99 and 1505-16, before dying in 1519. During this same period the first Sultan with the name Muhammad ruled intermittently over a 50 year span, 1484-7, 1499-1505, 1516-28 and 1530-37, interspersed with occasional invasions and rebellions. These were troubled and confused times in Kashmir! Clearly it is impossible that the Sikandar piece can have been struck more than 70 years earlier than the other two. The solution is to be found in the fact that the son of Fath Shah was called Sikandar, and he was proclaimed Sultan for a short period during a rebellion in 1521⁶. Hence, it seems likely that all three pieces were struck within a few years of 1521, unless there was an earlier occasion during this troubled period when Sikandar was proclaimed Sultan. In this context it should be observed that the date around the reverse seems to read 892 in words,⁷ the Hejira date of Fath Shah's first accession to the throne, while another specimen with the name of Muhammad Shah has the date 842 in numerals on the obverse.⁸ These inconsistent dates merely show that they cannot be trusted. It is tempting to assume that the reverse die was originally engraved for Fath Shah, perhaps late in his reign, but with his accession year, and the die was subsequently used after his deposition by Muhammad Shah and Sikandar Shah in 1521. The "842" was either an engraver's error for "892", or was merely copied verbatim from the coins of Zain-ul-Abiden.

This reattribution of the silver coins can be extended to the gold and copper coins. The gold piece listed by Stephen Album is identical in style to certain pieces of Fath Shah,⁹ although I have not found a die-identity, while the copper coins are also similar in style to those of the Fath Shah/Muhammad Shah period.

6. "A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir, 1320-1819" by Dr. R. K. Parmu, New Delhi, 1969, p.203.
 7. The reading of 792 in BMC contained an element of wishful thinking, as the author sought to date the piece to the earlier Sikandar Shah.
 8. Stephen Album, Price List no. 38 (Nov. 1984), no.1108.
 9. e.g. Stephen Album, Price List no. 32, no.204, and Whitehead ("The Gold Coins of the Sultans of Kashmir", Num. Chron. 1933, pp.257-67) nos. 6 and 9.

The Coins of the British in India. When is a Forgery not a Forgery ? by P. J. E. Stevens

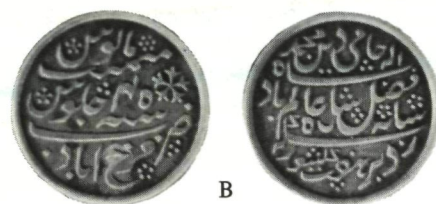
Some while ago I purchased a lot of about seventy copper coins supposedly struck by the British for use in their Bengal Presidency. Amongst these coins were a number of crude, lightweight forgeries of 37 san trisuli pice, but the coins that caught my attention were two base metal copies of Bengal Presidency rupees.

One of these coins was very obviously a forgery, both from its fabric, which looks like brass, and from the crudity of its design.

The second coin, however, compares so perfectly with the real thing that it would be impossible to distinguish the two were it not for the fact that the copy has been struck in a base metal, probably copper (compare fig. A, the copy, with fig. B, an example of an official issue). Indeed, it would be tempting to describe this second coin as 'a trial striking in copper' rather than just a contemporary copper forgery, particularly since the weight (14.01g) differs from the official weight (11.66g) so greatly. Surely such a good forger would ensure that the weight was correct. The question, then, is, 'have I made an exciting discovery or have I found just another base metal forgery; any comments?'



A



B

Edge	Plain
Die Axes	↑ ↑
Metal	Copper
Weight	14.01g
Diameter	27.2mm

Edge	Plain
Die Axes	↑ ↑
Metal	Silver
Weight	11.65g
Diameter	26.5mm

Four unusual mediaeval Afghan copper coins by C. M. Webdale

The following coins came from a large group of Afghan/N.W. Indian coins of varying periods (Indo-Greek to 19th century).



They are all of the same series, though coin 4 differs stylistically from the other three and is appreciably lighter in weight.

Obverse

legend seemingly arranged spirally from the centre to terminate in square Kufic inscription (unread). Whether the initial spiral in fact forms part of a word is uncertain.

Reverse possibly:

..... سنه
ثمان و
عشر و
(س) و ثمانمائة (خمسمائة)

The reverse reading of a date AH 818 or 518 is very tentative. The square Kufic style on the obverse may point towards the 8th - 9th century Hegira. The style of the reverse legend, however, points to an earlier period. On coin number 4, the words of the second line of the reverse are transposed compared to the other coins. The barbarised lettering and lighter weight suggest a later issue.

Any attributions or comments from members would be welcome.

Ch'ien Yu of the Ch'u State by Nicholas Rhodes

My article (Newsletter 100) entitled "A Large Coin of the Western Hsia Dynasty" generated a considerable amount of interest, and I would like to thank our member, Mr. Wei Yue Wang, of Huhehaote, Inner Mongolia, for correcting my attribution.

Apparently, some similar iron pieces have recently been excavated at Ch'ang Sha in Hunan Province, in company with other iron pieces inscribed "T'ien ts'e fu pao" (Schjoth 447, Tsai 179). This enables the coin to be attributed to the rebel State of Ch'u during the 5 Dynasty Period, and indeed a nien ho "Ch'ien Yu" was established in this State in 948AD. No doubt further details of this previously unpublished Chinese coin will be given when the excavated pieces are published.

An Unpublished Yuan Dynasty Coin by N. G. Rhodes



One of the more unusual coins in my collection is the piece illustrated above, which reads "Ta Yuan Chin Ho" (大元金合), an inscription not recorded in any publication, as far as I can ascertain.

This inscription is unusual in having the characters "Chin Ho" (金合), rather than "Yuan Pao" or "T'ung Pao". Another example can, however, be found in the Yuan Dynasty, the large piece reading "Ta Ch'ao Chin Ho" (大朝金合) published by Dr. Ting Fu Pao on p.140 of his 'Catalogue of Ancient Chinese Coins'. In view of this and the inscription "Ta Yuan", it is tempting to ascribe this piece to the period of the Yuan Dynasty.

Although the coin looks and feels genuine, I cannot guarantee that it is not a forgery or a fantasy piece. The characters have not been well impressed in the mould, but there is certainly no trace of them having been altered after casting. The quality of the casting is generally poor, although this is not unusual among Yuan Dynasty coins. There is a piece missing from the flan, fortunately not damaging the inscription, and close examination of the break shows that it was probably more due to faulty casting than to subsequent mishandling.

As regards provenance, I first saw the piece in 1965 among the unattributed cash coins of the late Mr. G. F. Chapman (U.K.). He had acquired it many years before, but unfortunately did not record the sources of his coins. He did tell me at the time, however, that he had been told that this piece had been found in Korea. Unfortunately this cannot now be verified.

In conclusion, this is either an interesting and unrecorded Yuan Dynasty cash, which cannot be attributed to any particular Emperor without further evidence, or else it is a clever concoction. I would appreciate the comments of those more knowledgeable than I so that its true status may be determined.

An Index of Chinese Cash Coins

Several years ago the writer began collecting Chinese coins. A number of standard works on the classification of these interesting coins are available in European languages, such as "The Lockhart collection of Chinese copper coins" by J. H. S. Lockhart, 1915, and "Chinese Currency" by F. Schj th, 1929. These books contain detailed descriptions of two large collections. However, they are far from complete and many of the less common coins are not reported, which limits their use as reference books.

Apart from these there are a number of books, which give general descriptions of the different types of coins, such as "Chinesische M nzen" by W. Patalas, 1965, "Chinese Cash" by O. D. Cresswell, 1971, and "Oriental coins and their values, part III" by M. Mitchiner, 1979. The illustrations in these books are sparse, which again limits their use as reference books. In addition to this, different classifications of particular coins are reported, often without reference to the source. The Chinese books, such as those by Ting Fu Pao and O. Tsai, are practically unusable for those people who do not know the Chinese language. These books do contain many more illustrations of the types of coins than the European ones.

A start has been made to compile an index of Chinese coins for personal use. The information from the books mentioned above has been collected and the whole thing has been prepared as a looseleaf index. Illustrations of the coins have been copied on the left hand pages, and on the right hand pages descriptions, relevant historical information and a concordance of the numbering found in the usual standard works, follows. Chronological order has been adopted. As far as possible the numbering of Schj th and Ting Fu Pao has been followed instead of introducing a new numbering system. It is possible to add information on rarity, prices and forgeries to this index. At this moment the section covering the period from approx. 25 AD to 1644 AD has almost been completed (from Wang Mang to the Ch'ing dynasty).

This index could also be of use to other collectors. I would very much appreciate hearing if there are any collectors who have made a similar inventory. It may be possible and useful to combine these efforts. If anyone is interested I am prepared to make duplicates of parts of my documentation available. The classification of certain coins, especially those of the smaller dynasties, often raises a problem. I would therefore be pleased to communicate with collectors, who have specific knowledge of certain periods, and who are prepared to correct parts of the index and maybe able to provide supplementary information. I would also appreciate receiving any information about relevant books, articles in journals, translations of Chinese publications and unreported coins. Unfortunately a library with detailed documentation on Chinese numismatics does not exist in the Netherlands.

The index is in English and has been recorded on a word processor, so that alterations and additions can easily be made.

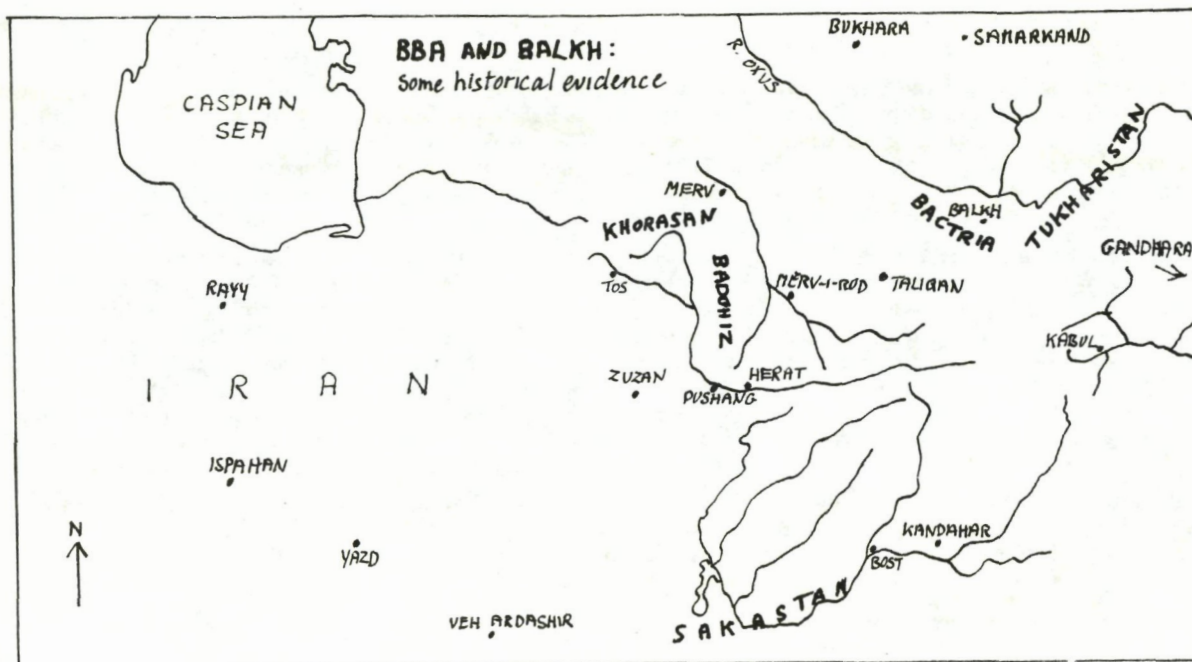
W. Op den Velde MD
Mercuriusstraat 1
2024 TL Haarlem
The Netherlands

BBA and Balkh: some historical evidence by Susan Tyler-Smith

The following is a pendant to the penultimate paragraph of my review of *An Introduction to Sasanian coins* by D. Sellwood, P. Whitting and R. Williams (abbreviated as SWW), see ONS Newsletter no. 100.

The attribution of the very common mint abbreviation \equiv , usually transliterated as BBA (but transliterated by SWW as BLH), to Balkh is not one I agree with. Unlike some ideas put forward by SWW this is not an original one. Mochiri¹ took up and expanded on the arguments put forward by Walker² but I do not find his discussion convincing.³ I do however agree with Mochiri that the less common name BHL \equiv should be attributed to Balkh. SWW merely echo one of Walker's arguments in saying that since Balkh was an important commercial centre it should have produced a large number of coins and that a common Sasanian mint abbreviation should be assigned to it. I do not intend to discuss here the reasons why Sasanian mints were located where they were, but there is no justification for assuming at this period or any other that because a town was commercially important it must therefore have been a mint. Balkh was certainly a large and flourishing city but it was located far to the east of the body of the Sasanian Empire and I hope to show, by examining the written evidence, that for much of the period in question it was not in Sasanian hands. This problem of identification underlines the need to combine written historical accounts and epigraphic evidence with the numismatic aspects when attempting to interpret mint abbreviations and names. The epigraphic arguments against reading \equiv as BLH have been concisely dealt with by Paruck⁴ and I will not repeat them here, but will concentrate on the historical facts to be gleaned from the histories written at the time or soon after and show how they link up with the coins. Since I do not read the languages necessary to tap all relevant sources I have followed the invaluable digest compiled by Marquart.⁵ This note is not intended to be an exhaustive study but merely to show that at certain periods Balkh cannot have been in Sasanian hands when \equiv was striking, whereas it was when \equiv was striking.

Since SWW always list the mint as BLH \equiv under individual kings never mentioning when it occurs as BHL \equiv I have summarised Mochiri's listings of both mint names.



	𐭠𐭣𐭥	𐭠𐭣𐭥
Varhran IV, 388-399	✓	—
Yazdgerd I, 399-420	✓	✓
Varhran V, 420-438	✓	—
Yazdgerd II, 438-457	✓	—
Peroz, 459-484	✓	—
Valash, 484-488	—	—
Jamasp, 497-499	—	—
Kavad, 484, 488-497, 499-531	—	—
Khusrau I, 531-579	—	—
Hormized IV, 579-590	—	✓ Yrs. 9-12
Varhran VI, 590-591	—	✓ Yr. 2
Vistahm, 591-c.597	—	—
Khusrau II, 590-628	✓ Yrs. 11-14, 16, 18-37	—


The history of Bactria, the capital of which was Balkh, and Tukharistan (now Northern Afghanistan) is often unclear during the time of the Sasanian dynasty but certain facts can be pieced together. Ardashir I (224-241) conquered the Kushan kingdom and until about 360 a member of the Sasanian royal family ruled the area as Kushanshah, striking coins in Merv, Herat and Balkh. In the mid to late fourth century the last Kushano-Sasanian king, Varhran II, lost much of his kingdom to a Hunnish tribe – the Chionites. They were temporarily subdued by Shapur II (309-379) in about 356-358 and became his allies in the wars with Rome. When Shapur II mounted another expedition against the Chionites in 367-8 he failed to suppress them. At the end of the fourth century a further wave of Huns, the Hephthalites, migrated into Bactria and drove the Chionites into Gandhara.



Unfortunately neither 𐭠𐭣𐭥 nor 𐭠𐭣𐭥 occur as mint names on the coins until the reign of Varhran IV when we find 𐭠𐭣𐭥 which is common, at a period when the histories state that the area had been overrun by the Hephthalites. Yazdgerd I uses both 𐭠𐭣𐭥 (common) and 𐭠𐭣𐭥 (rare). Mochiri (p.108) illustrates a single piece of exceptional style with the latter mint name written three times, giving the impression of being a propaganda piece over which the engraver has taken great care. Unfortunately I can find no written references to Balkh at this time. Varhran V issued coins from 𐭠𐭣𐭥 only, which are common. He defeated the Huns and appointed his brother Narses marcher lord (Marzban) to defend Iran against the Hephthalites, with his seat at Merv. Varhran V refortified Merv-i-Rod (presumably as a frontier town) and the list of Syrian bishops at this time includes sees as far east as Merv, Herat, Badghiz and Merv-i-Rod but no further. Around this time the border was fixed at Taliqan.






Yazdgerd II struck coins at 𐭠𐭣𐭥 only. He spent much of his reign fighting the Huns with varying fortunes, but there is no mention in the histories of his capturing any town from the Huns or his incorporating any of their land into the Sasanian empire. Peroz struck both gold and silver at 𐭠𐭣𐭥 (common). He soon provoked a war with the Huns by reviving his predecessors' tributary demands. The fighting, which occupied much of his reign, was disastrous. The Huns occupied Herat, Pushang and Badghiz. This occupation was possibly only temporary since in the second year of Valash the Bishop of Herat was present at the Synod of Akakious.


Valash, Kavad I, Jamasp and Khusrau I struck no coins with either abbreviation so their history will be considered briefly. The Hephthalites remained in Tukharistan and Bactria until they were defeated by an alliance of the Khan of the Turks and Khusrau I in about 554. The victors divided the territories between them, Khusrau I taking the land south of the Oxus, presumably including Bactria. He apparently regained Herat, Pushang and Qadishastan as they are mentioned sending bishops to the Synod of Isy'ojass in 588.

Hormizd IV struck coins with the name 𐭠𐭣𐭥 only for years 9-12 which are the commonest examples of this abbreviation. During his reign the Huns advanced into the Sasanian empire as far as Herat and Badghiz. Varhran Chubin, later the usurper Varhran VI, Spahbad of Khorasan, was sent against the invaders, threw them back, took Balkh by storm and conquered all

the land up to the Oxus. He then crossed the Oxus and defeated the king of that area in the eleventh year of Hormizd IV. Varhran VI struck coins only at  but was soon defeated by the rightful king, Khusrau II.

In the 28th year of Khusrau II the Turks plundered Iran as far as the provinces of Rayy and Ispahan, but then retreated to the Oxus. The Sasanians retaliated by pursuing the enemy as far as Balkh, plundering the whole land, Herat, Badghiz, Taliqan and all the area up to and including the whole of Tukharistan. They took many cities and destroyed them, then retreated to Merv and Merv-i-Rod. It seems clear that by now Tukharistan and Bactria were enemy lands and Merv-i-Rod was the last Iranian province in the east. Khusrau II struck no coins with the abbreviation  but did strike a very large coinage using  for most years from 11 to 37.

Although the facts given in this account are not as full as one would wish, it clearly emerges that Balkh, from the beginning of Sasanian rule, was not an integral part of the Empire. First it was ruled by a member of the Sasanian royal family as an independent prince, striking his own quite distinct gold/copper coinage, as opposed to the principally silver Sasanian coinage. Subsequently the area was invaded by Huns and Turks. Occasionally the Sasanians made plundering raids towards Balkh and on one occasion when we have written evidence that Balkh was captured by a Sasanian general we find coins with the name . Apart from this one brief spell and an earlier time when we know of one specimen struck by Yazdgerd I with the same mint name,  does not occur at all. On the other hand  is a prolific mint occurring on the coins of six of the later kings (the question of  on the coins of Yazdgerd III is a complicated one which I cannot go into here). For much of the time that  is used there is clear evidence that Balkh was not part of the Sasanian Empire.

One is still left with the enigma – why does  not strike at all for some Sasanian kings? This could perhaps be partially answered by attributing it to the court mint and arguing that it was only used when the king needed extra cash, perhaps for paying his troops, as may have been the case with the issues of Peroz and Khusrau II.

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A Mystery Solved? by Ken Wiggins

In the O.N.S. Newsletter nos. 62 - 63 of October - December, 1979, Raf van Laere published a note entitled "A coin of the Sultanate of Sambak (N.W. Borneo)?" He described three coins (two were illustrated) which he had seen in the Münzkabine of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (DDR) and noted that the museum inventory stated that the three coins were brought from Sabbas. Mr. van Laere thought that this may refer to the town of Sambas in the western part of Borneo and suggested that these pieces may have been struck by the Sultan of Samba in a period of turmoil between 1825 and 1841 to supply small change in the district.

I followed this in Newsletter no. 64 (February, 1980) merely by saying that I possessed some similar pieces and gave details of their fabric and design. I was unable to assist in attributing these coins and concluded by saying that I had found one specimen in Ceylon (bazaar in Colombo) in 1946.

It was interesting therefore to see one of these very coins listed and illustrated in Price List 47 (October, 1986) of our good friend Stephen Album. This illustration is reproduced here.



Steve describes this coin as a local falus of Lenjeh (or Lengeh) in Iran, with a bale mark design. He has appended a note under the entry as follows: "Bander Lenjeh, once a Portuguese stronghold, is a port on the Persian Gulf some 75 miles west of Bandar Abbas. The old form Lenjah has been superceded by the Iranian form Lengeh but the old form was still in use at the time Fasa'i wrote some 80 years ago. The balemark type resembles similar issues of Bushire. The coins are rare. I have handled only about 10 pieces. They were formerly ascribed to al-Hasa on the Arabian side of the Gulf but that is not correct."

Unfortunately Steve does not give reasons for his attribution and this invites some pertinent questions. Does the Arabic word read Lenjah? If so, what is the word above it? Has this coin ever been published before? If so, where? The English letters on one side are described by Steve as a bale mark. Whose? I would only remark here that this device is not at all similar to the diamond shaped "balemark" that appear on some copper coins of Bushire and that most 19th century civic copper coins of Persia have the word *zarb* preceding the mint name and many have the word *falus* on the reverse. One point in Steve's favour; did the note in the museum, possibly badly written, really mean B. Abbas (Bandar Abbas) and not Sabbas at all? If indeed these coins were brought from Bandar Abbas then it lends support to the Lenjeh attribution.

I hesitate to cross swords with Steve Album over a minor coin but I should like to know his reasons for attributing these coins to Lenjah or Lengeh in Iran and so, I suspect, would Raf van Laere, the Museum in Berlin and possibly the British Museum where these coins lay unticketed the last time I saw them. Let us hope that Steve Album will reach for his pen and save us all many sleepless nights.