

XXVII.

SOME COINS OF THE MAUKHARIS, AND OF THE
THANESAR LINE.

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THE history of the sixth century in Northern India is extremely difficult. As the Gupta empire fell to pieces petty states arose, of which but scanty records are available in the few inscriptions so far discovered. A recent find of coins seems to throw fresh light on the period, and in particular to afford material for fixing dates more exactly than has been possible hitherto.

In 1904 a labourer found an earthen pot of coins in the village of Bhiṭaura, *pargana* Amsin, District Fyzabad (Oudh). So far as is known, the whole of the coins, including one gold, 522 silver, and eight copper, were recovered. The following is a description of these coins :—

1. *N.* *Obverse.* King. Under left arm *Kidāra*.
Reverse. Goddess. Right margin *Kṛta(vīrya)*.

The coin resembles that figured in Cunningham's later Indo-Scythians (Little Kushāns), plate vi, No. 11, and described at p. 72.

2. *R.* Three very poor *varāha drammas* (cf. Cunn., *Mediæval India*, vi, 20) and a broken coin of uncertain type.

3. *Æ* (or a mixture). Eight copper coins of Pratāpāditya II of Kashmīr (cf. Cunn., *Mediæval India*, iii, 10).

4. The remaining 518 silver coins are of the Gupta silver type; that is, they bear a large head with a date on one side, and a peacock on the other with a long inscription. On seven coins the head faces the right, as on the Gupta coins, while on the others it faces the left. The inscriptions

round the peacock in every case but one, which will be referred to later, read *Vijitāvaniravanipati Śrī* (name) *deva jāyati*. The vowels are only marked in a few types. A summary of the names read on the coins is given below :—

	Number of Coins.
Īśānavarman	9
Śarvavarman	6
Avantivarman	17
(?) Harśa (not Harṣa)	1
Pratāpśīla	9
Śilāditya	284
	326

The coins of Śarvavarman bear a head facing right, while on the others the head faces left.

The remaining coins may be classified as follows :—

Coins with names and dates both gone	134
Coins with names gone, and only faint traces of dates	57
	191

The head on these faces left, and there is one more coin with name and date gone on which the head faces right. A more particular description of the coins may now be given.

Īśānavarman. As usual the name is written **श्रीशानवर्म**, the initial being merged in the title **श्री**. One coin bears a date which I read as 4x, but even the tens figure is doubtful. The head of the peacock is turned to the left on four coins and to the right on five. The portrait shows a face with a strongly-marked aquiline nose, and there is a small crescent at the crown of the head. (Pl. 1 and 2.)

Sarvavarman. Name written **श्रीशर्ववर्म**. Two coins bear dates which I read as 234 and 23—. The face is to right, and the reading of 200 is thus not quite certain, as the mark denoting the number of hundreds which stands at the right of the symbol is not on the coin. This point will be referred

to later. The peacock faces to right on all the coins. The king's head has the usual crescent at the crown, which also seems to contain a dot. (Pl. 3 and 4.)

Avantivarman. Name written श्रीवन्निवर्म. Three distinct dates are found, viz., (a) 250 (one coin), (b) 57 (five coins), (c) 71 (one coin). The peacock's head is to left on all but two of the coins dated 57. Where the crescent is distinct on the king's head, it has a dot also. There are also six coins on which the dates are very doubtful, and four from which they have disappeared. The peacock faces left on all of these but one. (Pl. 5-8.)

Doubtful king: (?) Harśa. The inscription begins *Vijitavanir* and seems to end *harśa*. I cannot make out the date, but it probably commences with the letter *sa* (= *samvat*, see below, coins of Śīlāditya). (Pl. 9.)

Pratāpaśīla. Name written अग्रतपश्ल without vowels. The peacock's head is to left on all nine coins. The crescent on the king's head is about the centre of the top instead of at the crown, and each horn terminates in a knob. Two coins have dates, the reading of which presents a certain amount of difficulty. Each date consists of three symbols. The topmost is the letter *sa*, exactly of the type given in Bühler's table iv, Nos. xi and xii. One would ordinarily expect this to represent the hundreds as the other symbols are apparently 10 and 1 or 11. The only symbol for a number which resembles *sa* is, however, that used for 40, and I cannot find any symbol for hundreds which is at all like this letter. The coins of Śīlāditya described below show clearly that the *sa* cannot be 40. This will be referred to later, but at present it is sufficient to say that I consider the *sa* stands for *samvat*. Four coins bear traces of dates which I cannot decipher, and three coins have lost all vestige. (Pl. 10-13.)

Śīlāditya. The name is usually written अश्लदत, vowels being very rarely given. On a few coins the final *akshara* is more clearly *tya*, the form varying between (1) ढ, (2) ञ, (3) ण, and (4) ण. The crescent on the head has also

various forms and positions: (1) at the crown, either (*a*) plain or (*b*) with knobs on the points, and (2) in the centre of the top of the head, with knobs and usually a dot in the centre. The dates on many of the coins are varied and present considerable difficulty, as the symbols differ from the ordinary form. There can, however, be absolutely no doubt that the highest symbol is invariably *sa*, as on the coins of Pratāpaśīla, and the symbols for 30 + 1 and 30 + 3 are unmistakable. I think that *sa* stands for *sanvat*, and the years are regnal years. The coins may be classified as follows:—

	COINS.
(1) Date 1 (?). Crescent at crown with knobs	1
(2) Date 6 (?). Crescent in middle of head	4
(3) Date 6 (?). <i>-tya = ३</i>	1
(4) Date 6 (?). Crescent nearer crown	5
(5) Date 10 (?). The symbol for date does not resemble any of those given in Bühler's table, but it might conceivably be a compound of <i>la</i> and <i>ta</i> , which are apparently used for 10. Crescent at crown. <i>-tya = २</i> , the <i>ya</i> being marked by a very slight elongation of the right limb of <i>ta</i>	8
(6) Date 10 (?). As on the preceding, but <i>-tya = २</i>	2
(7) Date 20 (?). The symbol resembles those given by Bühler, but the top is open instead of closed, and it may be a defective form of the symbol read as 10	6
(8) Date 25 (?). Symbol read as 20 is more like the forms given by Bühler than the preceding. The coin appears to be of copper silvered over	1
(9) Date 30 (?). Crescent at crown (3) and on top of head (1)	4
(10) Date 31 (?). Crescent at crown	3
(11) Date 31. There is no doubt about this date. The crescent is almost invariably at the crown. Only two coins show any vestige of a final <i>ya</i> (Pl. 14)	24
(12) Date 33. This is also certain. The crescent is at the top of the head, and there is no sign of <i>ya</i> . The inscriptions are generally poor (Pl. 15)	27

- (13) Date 33. Name gone 3
 (14) Date 3-. Symbol for 30 is fairly certain, but the unit is gone or doubtful in every case . . . 14
 (15) Dates for which I can propose no readings . . . 11
 (16) The second letter of the name reads *ha* instead of *la*. This is probably the engraver's error . . . 2

The remaining coins have no dates legible, but may be roughly classified as follows :—

	COINS.
(17) The symbol <i>sa</i> is fairly clear	36
(18) <i>-tya</i> written 𑀮	2
(19) <i>-tya</i> written 𑀮 . Crescent with knobs at crown . . .	3
(20) <i>-tya</i> written 𑀮 . Crescent with dot, at top of head . . .	6
(21) <i>-tya</i> as on preceding, but crescent at crown	4
(22) <i>-tya</i> as on 20 and 21, but crescent with dot at crown . . .	2
(23) Crescent at crown (Pl. 16)	52
(24) Crescent with knobs and dot at top of head (Pl. 17)	27
(25) Crescent with knobs at crown (Pl. 18)	12
(26) Crescent doubtful	24

The first point to notice in discussing the results to be obtained from these coins is that the names Avantivarman, Pratāpaśīla, and Śīlāditya are now published on coins for the first time. The only coins of Śarvavarman known hitherto bear a head to left instead of to right. There can be no doubt that Avantivarman is the Maukhari ruler of that name. It also seems reasonable to identify Pratāpaśīla with Prabhākara-vardhana, and Śīlāditya with Harṣa-vardhana. The absence of coins of the last-named has for long been a difficulty, and the attribution to him by Dr. Hoernle of a peculiar gold coin does not seem quite satisfactory. If my readings of the dates are correct, the coins are especially valuable, and point to the establishment of a new era. The dates we have for the calculation of this era are as follows :—

Toramāṇa : 52 (Cunn, Med. India, p. 20).

Īsānavarman : 54 (Cunn., Med. India, ii, 12, and V. A. Smith in J.A.S.B., 1894, p. 193) ; 55 (Cunn., A.S.R., ix, p. 27, where name is read as Śānti Varma).

Śarvavarman : 58 (V. A. Smith, l.c.); 234 and 23- (present find).

Avantivarman : 57, 71, and 250 (present find).

There can be little doubt that the dates 234, 23-, and 250 are in the Gupta era, and thus equivalent to 553, 54- or 55-, and 569. It has generally been assumed that the dates 52, 54, 55, and 58 were in the same era, and this era has been the subject of considerable discussion, a summary of which will be found in Mr. V. A. Smith's paper on the Gupta period in *J.A.S.B.* for 1894, pp. 194-5 and 209. It is assumed that Toramāṇa's coins are dated in a "White Hun era," commencing about 448 according to Drouin, or 456-7 according to Cunningham. The initial date is checked by a variety of considerations which require the reign of Toramāṇa, the father of Mihirakula, to be dated about 500 A.D. The synchronism now afforded by the coins seems to point to one of two alternatives. Either the date on Toramāṇa's coins is in a different era from that of the Maukharis, or else this Toramāṇa is not the father of Mihirakula. The latter supposition is by no means improbable, as the same name was sometimes held by a grandfather and grandson, but I know of no other mention of a king called Toramāṇa. A more definite suggestion can be made with regard to the Maukhari era. It is agreed by all that the rulers of this line must be placed in the sixth century, and this fixes the dates on Śarvavarman's coins as 200 odd of the Gupta era. A comparison of the dates given in the Maukhari era with those given in the Gupta era points to the commencement of the former about 500 A.D. The great probability of a new era commencing from about that date appears to have escaped notice, but I would point out that Āryabhaṭa composed his great astronomical work in 499 A.D., when exactly 3,600 years of the Kaliyuga had elapsed. Dr. Thibaut, to whose volume on Astronomy, etc., in Bühler's *Grundriss* (p. 55) reference should be made, informs me that he considers it by no means improbable that Āryabhaṭa actually invented the Kaliyuga, in the sense that he fixed its definite

period, though the epoch was already familiarly recognised in a vague way. Whether this is so or not his work was important, and the completion of 3,600 years brought so prominently to notice was obviously a suitable point for the commencement of a new era. Assuming this, the known dates of the Maukharis become in the Christian era—

Īśānavarman, 553.

Śarvavarman, 553, 54- or 55-, 557.

Avantivarman, 556, 569, 570.

It will be noticed that Śarvavarman's and Avantivarman's dates overlap, and it is possible that what I have read as 57 for the latter should be 67.¹

The epigraphic references to the Maukharis will be found in Dr. Fleet's Gupta Inscriptions, Nos. 47, 51, and 46. From the two former the following genealogical tree has been compiled :—

Mahārāja Harivarman = Jayaswāmini	
Mahārāja Ādityavarman = Harṣagupta	
Mahārāja Īśvaravarman = Upagupta	
Mahārājādhirāja Īśānavarman = Lakshmīvatī	
Mahārājādhirāja Śarvavarman = ?	

It will be noticed that the earliest coins yet found are of Īśānavarman, who is the first to be styled Mahārājādhirāja. Avantivarman is only referred to in Dr. Fleet's inscription, No. 46, where he is called Parameshwara, a title also applied to Śarvavarman. From that inscription it may be inferred that he followed Śarvavarman, but no later limit can be assigned for his reign, except that he preceded Jivita Gupta II, who was in power about the beginning of the eighth century. Dr. Fleet's inscription No. 42 records that Kumāra Gupta (II) conquered Īśānavarman. I would suggest that the different arrangement of the head on the

¹ Cf., for the difficulty in settling these dates, Dr. Fleet in *Indian Antiquary*, 1885, p. 68.

coins now found is connected with the relations between the Maukharis and the later Guptas. The same inscription records that Dāmodara Gupta, son of Kumāra Gupta II, also defeated a Maukhari king. The earlier coins of Śarvarman, now published, bear a head to right as on the Gupta coins, and are dated in the Gupta era, both points indicating that the Maukharis still recognised the Guptas as their suzerains. The later coin, published by Mr. Vincent Smith, uses the Maukhari era, and bears a head to left like the coins of Īśānavarman. Avantivarman's coins all bear a head to left, but the use of the Gupta era may indicate a temporary subjection or alliance.

Beyond the fact that their coins are now published for the first time nothing new is to be learnt about Prabhākaravardhana and Harṣavardhana from this find. The era of the latter is well known, but it is of interest to know that the former also used an era which in all probability was regnal.

LIST OF COINS REPRESENTED IN THE PLATE.

1. Īśānavarman: date 4x; head of peacock to left.
2. „ date uncertain; head of peacock to right.
3. Śarvarman: date 234.
4. „ date 23x.
5. Avantivarman: date 250.
6. „ date 57; head of peacock to left.
7. „ date 57; head of peacock to right.
8. „ date 71.
9. Doubtful king: (?) Harśa.
- 10-13. Pratāpaśīla: traces of dates.
14. Śīlāditya: date 31.
15. „ date 33.
16. „ date uncertain; crescent at crown.
17. „ date uncertain; crescent with knobs and dot at top of head.
18. „ date uncertain; crescent with knobs at crown.



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10



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14



15



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