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NUMISMATIC NOTES
AND MONOGRAPHS

No. 13



THE PRE-MOHAMMEDAN COINAGE
OF NORTHWESTERN INDIA

By R. B. WHITEHEAD

THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY
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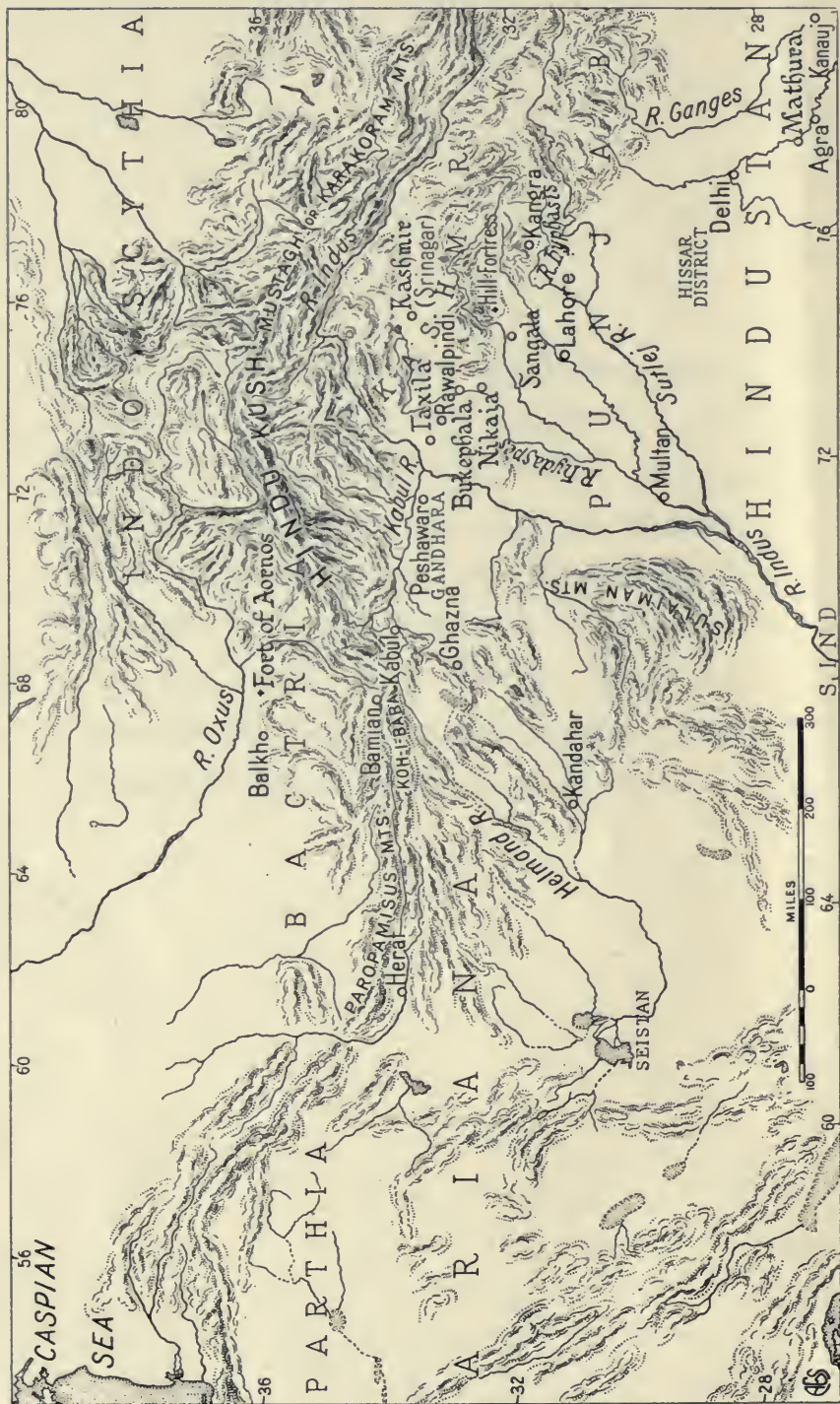
NUMISMATIC NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS

EDITOR: SYDNEY P. NOE

NUMISMATIC NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS
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R. B. WHITEHEAD

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PRE-MOHAMMEDAN COINAGE OF NORTHWESTERN INDIA

BY R. B. WHITEHEAD

It has been laid down as a general rule that coins cannot be considered of primary importance as historical evidence. Their chief uses are to check the statements of contemporary writers and to fill in details; they rarely make history. In the early periods of a nation's history, when evidence from coins is of the greatest value, it is generally meagre. In later periods when inscriptions on coins are fuller and more illuminating, we have a variety of other sources, so that the evidence of coins naturally occupies a subordinate position. On the other hand, we do not hesitate to accept the as-

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sertions of coins, because money always mirrors current events. Even when the reflections are distorted, their very untruthfulness not infrequently affords valuable information.

Apart from actual statements, coins supply historical material in a variety of indirect ways. For instance, since gold coins of the Greeks and Scythians in India are practically unknown, while the gold currency of the Kushans is extensive, we are free to conclude that gold for some reason had become abundant after the downfall of the Greek power

Coins have indirectly proved of the highest value to the archæologist, for the finding of coins along with statues and inscriptions, where the latter are undated, gives a clue to the period at which they were produced. Such finds have shown that Græco-Buddhist statues of the best period of the Gandhara school which is splendidly exemplified in the Punjab Museum, Lahore, were contemporary with the Kushan king, Kanishka. Again, coins present us with a continuous series

of documents illustrating the development of the artistic designs which embellish them, and of the scripts in which the superscriptions are written. For these reasons they are of material interest to the artist and to the epigraphist. In addition to facts, coins are fruitful of surmise. The perils of such surmising are perhaps illustrated in the attempts made to unravel the mutual relationships of the various members of the Indo-Bactrian, Scythian and Parthian dynasties. Still, such deductions, if free from fancy, cannot be far away from the truth and in certain periods of early Indian history we have to be content with conjecture. So much for a general consideration of the Muse of history and her numismatic handmaid.

Now let us turn to Indian history and numismatics. My present paper deals with the monetary issues of the early foreign invaders—Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Kushans and Ephthalites—and with the indigenous pieces from the earliest times down to the Mohammedan

invasion which are found in Northwest India—especially the Punjab, in which province I have served for seventeen years as a member of the Indian Civil Service. I propose to contribute a second paper which will deal with the coins of the Punjab from the Mohammedan conquest down to the present day.

The term "Indo-Greek" is adopted as a general appellation for the monetary issues of the Greek invaders of India and their immediate successors with whom Greek culture, as revealed by their coins, was still a living force. For convenience I also include the issues of the Bactrian Greeks just prior to the invasion of India. I propose to distinguish the Greek invaders of India by the name "Indo-Bactrian." Then come the issues of what are conventionally termed the Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Great Kushans down to and including the better executed coins of Vasu Deva. The Bactrians and Indo-Bactrians overlap as some of the Greek kings struck money of both types.

In his preface to the British Museum Catalogue of the Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India, Mr. Stuart Poole remarked that few fields of numismatics offer richer material, historical, archæological and even philological. To a very large extent these contemporary documents in metal are the only testimonies to a period which would otherwise have disappeared from history. There are a few meagre notices by historians of the Bactrian kings Diodotos, Euthydemos, Demetrios and Eukratides. We are also informed that Heliokles was the last king of Bactria. He was overthrown by an irruption of savage tribes from the steppes of Central Asia, and the Greeks who had crossed to the Indian side of the Hindu-Kush were completely cut off from European civilization. The names of Menander and Apollodotos are just mentioned by classical annalists, but those of the numerous other Indo-Bactrian princes are only found on their coins, and till fourteen years ago no other evidence of their existence was known.

But we now have the Brahmi inscription at Besnagar in the Gwalior State, which relates that the pillar on which it is inscribed was erected by Heliodoros, son of Dion, a subject of the great king Antialkidas of Taxila. This is one of the many remarkable discoveries made in recent years by the Archæological Department of India.

The historical importance of the coins now being discussed is not confined to the issues of the Greek princes. Our knowledge of the so-called Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Great Kushans is almost entirely derived from the study of the coins. The Indo-Parthian pieces give us the name of Gondophares, known to Christian tradition as the Indian ruler under whom the Apostle Saint Thomas suffered martyrdom. One of the Kushan rulers is Kanishka, the famous convener of the fourth great Buddhist Council, the body whose deliberations gave consistency and official sanction to the doctrines of Northern Buddhism. As regards the philological importance of the Indo-

Bactrian coins, it must not be forgotten that they provided the key to the Kharoshthi or Bactrian Pali script. Until their discovery the edicts engraved in this script on the pillars and rocks by the Mauryan king Asoka could not be deciphered because they were written in unknown characters. The Indo-Bactrian pieces are bilingual and were the "Rosetta stone" by means of which the Asoka edicts were unravelled. Many documents written in the Kharoshthi character have been recently discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in Chinese Turkestan. A further interest lies in the shape of these coins, many of them being square or oblong, and in the characteristic designs of gods and animals as conceived by the oriental Greek artist.

A rapid sketch of the numismatic history of the various dynasties is now in order. In the summer of B. C. 334, Alexander the Great crossed the Hellespont at the head of thirty thousand infantry and four thousand five hundred cavalry. He forced the passage of the

Persian frontier and afterwards defeated the Persian monarch Darius in two decisive battles at Issus and Arbela. The death of Darius in B. C. 330 was followed by a revolt of the Persian governors of what is now Western Afghanistan, and the rebellion of these eastern satraps showed Alexander that resistance had not died with the decease of the monarch. His first plans were probably confined to the humiliation of Persia, but they seem gradually to have been enlarged with success until they embraced the complete subjugation of the Persian empire and the conquest of India even to the mouth of the Ganges.

Alexander's comprehensive mind contemplated much more than a predatory excursion resulting only in plunder. When he determined on the conquest of Bactria and India, he had also formed plans for their permanent occupation and future government. This he purposed to effect by securing the goodwill of his subjects. By the year 328 he had crushed the rebellious Persian satraps and had

carried his arms over the River Oxus into Bactria. Early in the following spring, Alexander crossed the Indian Caucasus (Hindu Kush). He spent the remainder of the year 327 in the reduction of the various cities and strongholds of the Kabul valley, ending with the capture of the famous rock-fort of Aornos. In the spring of B. C. 326 he crossed the River Indus at Ohind and marched to Taxila (now known as Shahdheri), twenty miles northwest of Rawalpini, where he was hospitably received by the Indian king whose capital it was. From Taxila Alexander advanced to the River Hydaspes (Jhelum) where he was so stoutly opposed by the Indian monarch Porus that he could only pass the river by a stratagem. Then followed a great battle between the Greeks and Indians, the submission of Porus and the foundation of the cities of Nikaia and Bukephala. Next came the capture of the hill-fortress of Sangala and the advance to the River Hyphasis (Beas) beyond which the Greek army, dispirited by

long marches and the warlike character of the people, refused to proceed.

There, says Gibbon, on the eastern bank of the Hyphasis, on the verge of the desert, the Macedonian hero halted and wept. He erected twelve huge altars dedicated to the principal deities of Greece and then retraced his steps to the banks of the Hydaspes, where he prepared a fleet to convey his army to the sea. After various adventures he reached the Indian Ocean about the middle of B. C. 325. The Greek fleet coasted round to the Persian Gulf while Alexander himself made a long and harassing march through the desert hinterland of the Arabian Sea to Persepolis and Babylon. He died at Babylon shortly after his arrival in B. C. 323.

The chief provinces of Alexander's empire were apportioned to his leading officers. The eastern provinces were Bactriana, Ariana, and India, or the countries watered by the Rivers Oxus, Helmund and Indus, respectively. India comprised the three satrapies of the

Parapamisadæ (Kabul Valley), the Punjab and Sind. Out of the confusion which followed Alexander's death, Seleukos, satrap of Babylon, emerged as the predominant ruler of Bactriana and Ariana, but was not successful in his expedition against Chandragupta Maurya, king of India, known to the Greeks as Sandrokottos. By the resulting treaty, about 305 B. C., the Kabul Valley, the Punjab and Sind were added to the dominions of Chandragupta, and Bactriana became the most easterly province of the kingdom of Seleukos. The pact thus made between the Indians and the Greeks was cemented by the residence of Megasthenes, ambassador of Seleukos at the Indian Court. To Megasthenes and his successor the ancient Greeks and Romans were indebted for nearly all their knowledge of the Indian territory.

It is clear, therefore, that Alexander's settlements in India, whatever they may have been, had disappeared within twenty years of his death and we have no reason to believe that his rapid march through

the Punjab left anything permanent behind it. No trace of his twelve altars has ever been discovered, which is not surprising considering the great changes which have taken place in the courses of the Punjab rivers during the last two thousand years. It is extremely doubtful that Alexander struck coins in India. However, a second Greek invasion of the Kabul Valley and India was to take place with more durable consequences.

Seleukos was assassinated in B. C. 280 and was succeeded by his son Antiochos Soter. Antiochos II, surnamed Theos, followed his father Antiochos Soter in B. C. 261 and commenced hostilities against Egypt. The eastern provinces of the Syrian empire, Bactria and Parthia, seized this opportunity to cast off a yoke which had become little more than nominal. The details of this revolt are obscure, but it resulted in the establishment of a remarkable offshoot of Hellenic colonial enterprise in the heart of Asia. Bactria had greatly increased in strength as the result of fifty years of almost con-

tinuous peace, and its governor Diodotos assumed independent power. At about the same time a Parthian named Arsakes succeeded in setting up a separate State and launched Parthia on its great career as the rival not only of Bactria and Syria but ultimately of Rome. These important events are assigned to the year 250 B. C. Diodotos struck coins in his own name, with a design of the thundering Zeus, and assumed the title Soter, meaning saviour or protector. This title, if it had any special significance, may have referred to the part played by Bactria in protecting the eastern flank of the Hellenic world from the barbarians of Central Asia. He was probably succeeded by his son of the same name, and this second Diodotos fell a victim to the conspiracy headed by one Euthydemus, who appears to have taken effectual means to prevent any of the rival family from disputing his retention of power. Under Euthydemus, Bactria attained the summit of its prosperity. About 209 B. C. he successfully resisted a

formidable invasion by Bactria's former suzerain, Antiochos III, the king of Syria. Subsequently he carried the Bactrian arms over the Hindu Kush into the Kabul Valley. Doubtless his son Demetrios took a prominent part in these military operations. The demeanor of Demetrios as a youth had won the regard of Antiochos; his exploits as a man pushed the Greek dominion in the East well over the Indian border. The story of Demetrios must have been preserved down to a very late period, as Chaucer refers to the "grete Emetreus, king of Inde," in the Knight's Tale.

Euthydemus figures on several fine coins as a man in the prime of life with a stern and heavy face. The seated Herakles is the usual design on the reverse of the gold and silver coins, while a prancing horse figures on the copper pieces—possibly a reference to Balkh, the capital of Bactria, the city of the horse.

Demetrios must have acceded to the throne about 190 B. C. There is reason

to believe that he extended the Greek conquests to the Delta of the Indus, but his coins are seldom if ever found east of the Indus. The best known issue of Demetrios is the series which represents the king wearing an elephant's scalp head-dress; these coins are purely Attic in design and weight. Demetrios, like Euthydemos, seems to have adopted Herakles as his patron deity. Herakles, the Hercules of the Romans, was the most celebrated of the heroes of classical antiquity. He was the apotheosis of rude strength and valor. His weapons were the club and the bow and arrow; his most frequent attributes are the club and lion-skin. He was a great traveller and is said to have reached India, an exploit which is also attributed to Dionysos, the god of vegetation and the giver of wine and alcoholic pleasures. In new lands reached by the Greeks, some local hero or divinity who represented strength of body and mighty deeds would be identified with Herakles, hence his prominence on Indo-Greek coins.

Three obscure princes who were approximately contemporary with, and possibly subordinate to Diodotos and Euthydemos, were Antimachos Theos, Pantaleon and Agathokles. Agathokles struck a very interesting and excessively rare series of silver medallions, which bear his name on the reverse side, but on the obverse give the portraits and names of Alexander, Diodotos, Euthydemos and Antiochos Nikator. It is clear that he is claiming relationship with them or acknowledging their suzerainty, but history affords us not a single hint on which we might base an account of what must have been a chequered career. These coins present three conceptions of Zeus, first, the god enthroned bearing an eagle on his outstretched right hand; then as an avenging deity shielded by the ægis and brandishing a thunderbolt; and thirdly, in an erect position carrying the three-headed Hecate on his right hand.

Zeus, the greatest of the Greek deities, the father and king of gods and of men, was primarily the god of the sky and is

represented in Art as the ideal of ripe manhood, a mature figure with wavy hair and shaggy beard. The attributes of Zeus are the sceptre, eagle, thunderbolt, and sometimes the figure of Nike on his outstretched hand. Kings and queens as depicted on the coins always wear the royal diadem. This was originally the blue and white band tied round the tiara of the Persian monarchs and was the old Asiatic symbol of royalty. It later took the form of a white silk ribbon sometimes embroidered with pearls.

It was probably while Demetrios was fighting on the Indian side of the Hindu Kush that his authority in Bactria was undermined by a rival named Eukratides who appears to have been some connection of the royal house of Seleukos and who eventually was able to usurp the regal authority in Bactria. This happened about the year 175 B. C. In the end Eukratides emerged triumphant from the struggle with Demetrios, who is held to have perished or to have been deposed about 160 B. C.

The extension of the Greek dominion to the south of the Hindu Kush is reflected in the coinage of Demetrios, who is the first of the Bactrian Greeks to strike money on the Indian weight-standard with an inscription in the Indian vernacular (now called Kharoshthi), in addition to the Greek legend; the one legend being a literal translation of the other. There are one or two very scarce bilingual copper coins of Demetrios of the characteristic Indian square shape, and I possess an Indian tetradrachm not yet published.

The money of Eukratides has been found abundantly, both the pure Greek kind current in Bactria proper and the Indian bilingual class struck for use on the Indian side of the Hindu Kush. The earliest issues of Eukratides bear the image of Apollo. Apollo was one of the chief divinities of Greece, the god of sunshine and light, lord of oracles and prophecy, of music and poetry, and the ideal of manly youth and beauty. His attributes were the bow and arrow and

the tripod-lebes, a three-footed stool bearing the lebes or cauldron for burning incense. The most characteristic issues of Eukratides are the splendid tetradrachms with the triumphant design of the mounted Dioskouroi, the great twin brethren, sons of Zeus. Their principal function was that of divine protectors and aiders of mankind, more especially travellers by sea, and their stars appeared above the ship of the voyager as a sure sign of help. They are shown on coins either mounted or on foot, and carry palms of victory and lances. Their distinctive dress was the chlamys and the pilos. The chlamys originated as a rider's cloak worn over armour, a short light mantle clasping at the neck. The pilos was a conical cap of felt or leather worn by artisans and fisher folk. Some seventy years ago a sensation was caused in the numismatic world by the discovery of a gold twenty-stater piece of this type. That magnificent coin was purchased for the French National Collection and may be seen in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

It is the largest surviving gold coin of ancient times, is still unique and is a fitting token of Bactrian wealth and power.

The Roman historian Justin tells us that Eukratides while returning from India was murdered by his own son. The name of the parricide is not recorded. This event is assigned to the year 150 B. C. Some authorities have identified the murderer with Heliokles, some with Apollodotos. Be that as it may, the removal of the strong hand was followed by the rise of a number of princelings probably belonging to the rival houses of Eukratides and Euthydemos, who constantly fought amongst themselves and whose civil wars hastened the dissolution of the Bactrian monarchy. Heliokles and Antialkidas are the last kings to strike money of the Attic standard and design. It is therefore safe to assume that with them passed away the Greek authority over Bactria, and that after their time the Greek power was limited to the Kabul Valley and the Northwest

Punjab. Bactria was overrun by an irruption of nomadic tribes who are known as Saka Scythians, and the Greeks south of the Hindu Kush were completely cut off and are heard of no more. Positively all that history has to tell us of the Indo-Bactrians consists of two casual references to Apollodotos and Menander. I have already stated that the Besnagar pillar inscription, discovered in 1907, is the only known inscription containing a reference to any Bactrian or Indo-Bactrian king. Excavations at Balkh would probably give invaluable results, but at the present time Balkh is inaccessible for the European investigator. We have reason to believe that the Sakas were an involuntary vanguard thrust over the Bactrian frontier by the pressure of other obscure hordes on the Mongolian plains who were destined to overwhelm and replace both Greeks and Sakas in Afghanistan and Northwestern India. I shall briefly allude to these developments after tarrying a few moments with the declining fortunes of the Greeks.

The death of Eukratides was speedily followed by the extinction of the Greek power in Bactria, Heliokles being held to be the last Greek king of Bactria and India. The coins, however, show that a king named Antialkidas, who was probably later than Heliokles, struck money of both Bactrian and Indo-Bactrian types. After the time of Heliokles and Antialkidas, Greek rule was confined to the Indian side of the Hindu Kush, and the Greek dominions appear to have split up into a number of petty states which were generally in a chronic state of war amongst themselves. Sir Alexander Cunningham held that only thirty years elapsed between the death of Heliokles and the end of the Greek rule in India under the last Greek king, Hermaios. Mr. Vincent Smith says one hundred and eighty years. The latest and best informed opinion, that of Professor E. J. Rapson, places the death of Eukratides about 150 B. C. and the downfall of Hermaios about 20 A. D.

We have to fit into this period the

reigns of some twenty-five Greek princes whose names, with the exception of Apollodotos and Menander, are known from their coins only, which, of course, are all of the bilingual Indo-Bactrian types and weights. The slight progressive degradation of design and workmanship combined with the knowledge of the find-spots and such minor details as the comparative abundance or scarcity of the coins of each king, form the sole evidence which the ravages of time have spared to tax the constructive ingenuity of the modern investigator. Menander (apparently the Milinda of the Buddhist records) is the only Bactrian king after Eukratides of whom contemporary records tell us anything. He probably reigned at Sagala, possibly the modern Punjab town of Sialkot, from about 160 to 130 B. C., and seems to have united the entire Greek power in India under himself. He succeeded in the reconquest of the Indian kingdom of Demetrios—the Northwest Punjab, Kabul Valley and Sind—and may have carried the Greek

arms in raiding expeditions down the Ganges valley to Patna. His conversion to Buddhism is a moot question, but there can be no doubt that Buddhism exercised a great power over the early invaders of India, as we shall see in the case of the Kushan emperor, Kanishka. The death of Menander seems to have been followed by a general scramble for power. About the same time the Hindu princes must have driven the Greeks back from Menander's outlying territories in the Punjab plains. A gradual decline ended in the downfall of the last Greek king, Hermaios.

The coins of Apollodotos, as we should expect from his name, are largely devoted to the cult of Apollo. But the silver issues usually bear the image of Athene with Ægis and thunderbolt. She was one of the principal Greek deities, personifying to them the guiding influence of life in counsel, industry and strategy of war. Her poetical name was Pallas. As the patron goddess of Athens she was regarded as representing the pre-eminence

of the Greek genius in art, literature and science. Her special attribute was the ægis, a goat skin plated with scales in which is set the head of Medusa. The companion or symbol of the goddess was the owl.

Gold coins of the Bactrian Greeks are extremely scarce and of the Indo-Bactrians are absolutely unknown. I have already mentioned the unique twenty-stater piece of Eukratides. The only other gold coin of Eukratides known to me is the stater now in the cabinet of Mr. E. T. Newell, President of the American Numismatic Society. Indo-Bactrian silver coins are found in the tetradrachm and drachm sizes, considerably smaller than the corresponding Bactrian denominations which are on the Attic scale.

As a rule the tetradrachms are extremely rare. For example, when I wrote my Punjab Museum Catalogue (1914) I knew of only one Indian tetradrachm of Heliokles, one of Strato and Agathokleis, three of Archebios, one of Amyntas, four of Antialkidas. They are comparatively

abundant for Menander, Hippostratos and Hermaios. The usual size is the drachm. Polyxenos is known from one silver and one copper coin (both in the Punjab Museum); Telephos from three silver and half a dozen copper coins; Peukolaos from two silver and three or four copper; Theophilos from one silver and half a score copper; Apollophanes from a dozen silver. Several other princes are almost as rare. There is no reason why new names should not be found. One or two drachm issues are square, but the tetradrachms are invariably round. The copper coins are usually square or rectangular. Kingly titles commonly found are *Soter*, protector; *Dikaios*, just; *Aniketos*, invincible; *Nikephoros*, victory-bearing. As regards the Kharoshthi language, I may just mention that *Basileos* translates into *Maharajasa*, *Dikaiou* into *Dhramikasa* and *Nikephorou* into *Jayadharasa*; in these three words the familiar *Maharaja*, *Dharma* (right) and *Jai* (victory) are plainly to be seen. The Greek monogram

may denote the name of the local magistrate under whose authority the coin was struck, or sometimes the mint.

We know that Hermaios was the last of the Indo-Bactrian kings because there is a class of coins which bears two names, that of Hermaios in the Greek legend, and Kujula Kadphises in the Kharoshthi. This inference is definitely proved by the disappearance of the name of Hermaios from the coinage, its place being taken by that of the Kushan conqueror Kujula Kadphises in the Greek legend without alteration in the type, although modern research does not admit that Kujula Kadphises was necessarily the immediate barbarian successor of Hermaios. Thus ended the Greek dominion in Bactria and India after a brilliant career of at least one hundred and fifty years from the establishment of the independent kingdom of Bactria by Diodotos in the year 250 B. C. But though the political power of the Greeks had disappeared, yet Greek culture and civilization survived for another century

or so, as shown by the coins of the Indo-Scythian sovereigns Vonones, Moas and their successors, as well as by the great Kushan conqueror Kujula Kadphises and his dynasty.

I should like to interject a few general remarks on these Greek coins. They are beautiful, interesting, rare, and of great value to the historian. They possess all the qualities necessary to attract and stimulate attention. I suppose I should never have become a coin collector but for the fact that in the early part of my service in the Punjab I saw two Indo-Bactrian coins which had been found in my own District. It is possible for a collector fortunately situated, in Peshawar for instance, to acquire a fair number of the commoner kinds of these coins from the bazaars alone. But the modern collector, however well placed, will not make a good collection without recourse to professional agents. He will find that the Bactrian series has been very extensively forged. What a pity it is that the modern collector cannot wander about Kabul

and the Kabul Valley in the happy way that the American pioneer Masson did ninety years ago! Under present circumstances, Afghanistan is quite inaccessible for the European, and the excavation of Balkh must await more fortunate times. A name well known in connection with Bactrian coins is that of Sir Alexander Cunningham, a former Director-General of Archæology in India. Sir Alexander was one of the first workers in this field and a keen collector for nearly half a century. His unrivalled cabinet is in the British Museum.

I must now ask you to go back with me to the time of the last Bactrian king, Heliokles, and the destruction of the Greek power in Bactria by the Saka Scythian invasion. The term Scythian was applied indiscriminately to the nomadic peoples of Central Asia. It is generally accepted that the hordes which have successively appeared as conquerors, coming from the Asian steppes to the border provinces of Persia and India during the first century B. C. and the five

succeeding centuries, are the following in the order of their arrival—the Sakas, the Kushans or Great Yue-Chi of the Chinese historians, the Lesser Kushans or Little Yue-Chi, and the Ephthalites or White Huns.

The ultimate impelling force of these successive waves of invasion from Central Asia seems to have been the deterioration of the grazing grounds. The fall of the Greek princes in India was merely one incident in the history of that well-nigh irresistible migration of entire nations in arms, which, after harassing India, overran almost the whole of Europe, and under the leadership of Attila the Hun all but overthrew European civilization. India was again visited by a similar scourge in the times of Chingiz Khan and of Taimur; and the Mughal invasion of Babur was followed by the establishment of the Mongol or Mughal empire of Hindustan.

According to Chinese accounts the Sakas were driven out of the countries north of the Oxus by the Yue-Chi. Re-

tiring to the south and then to the east, they worked round over a region which roughly corresponds with the present provinces of Siestan, Sind and the Punjab. This, of course, meant the immediate overthrow of the Greeks in Bactria and the eventual destruction of the Greek power in the Punjab, possibly on the death of Menander. However, the Greeks must have continued to hold the Kabul Valley till the time of Hermaios. It is recorded that the Saka tribes who occupied Sakastene or Seistan afterwards separated and formed several distinct states under different rulers. This seems to be borne out by the three distinct dynasties of kings whose names have been preserved on their coins. That proceeding from Vonones and his lieutenants, Spalahores and Spalagadames, held to the west of the Indus; a second dynasty from Maues (or Moas) and the Azes, on both sides of that river; and a third in Sind and the west of Central India. To this last the great satrap Nahapana belonged.

There is no direct historical evidence that the Sakas ever occupied the Punjab, but the three monarchs Moas, Azes and Azilises, whose coins are found abundantly in the Northwest Punjab and Hazara, are accepted as Saka Scythians. They issued an extensive silver and copper bilingual coinage, the Greek legend being quite legible. Like that of the Indo-Bactrian princes, this coinage is without a single specimen in gold, with the possible exception of a tiny gold piece in the Lahore Museum bearing the unique name Athama. In sharp contrast with the Indo-Bactrian coins the pieces of the Indo-Scythians never give us a portrait of the ruler. The coins prove that Azes had an Indian general, Aspa Varma, son of Indra Varma, who also served under the greatest of Azes' successors, Gondophares. Sir Alexander Cunningham makes Gondophares the founder of a separate Saka dynasty in succession to that of Moas, Azes and Azilises, but it is more natural to call this dynasty Indo-Parthian, as the portraits and the names

of the kings are Parthian. Abdagases was the nephew of Gondophares, and other members of the same line were Orthagnes, Pakores and Sanabares.

The currency of Gondophares is found in great abundance over a wide stretch of country from Peshawar to Delhi. His name is derived from the same origin as that of Gaspard, one of the three Wise Men from the East, and occurs in the Christian tradition concerning the later life of the Apostle Thomas. The apocryphal Acts of Thomas contain certain statements which discoveries, made since the commencement of the nineteenth century, have enabled us to test in the light of actual history. The narrative tells us that Thomas, much against his will and inclination, had to undertake the work of preaching the Gospel to the Indians, and that he was placed in the hands of an envoy of Gondophares, king of the Indians, who had been sent to Syria in search of an architect able to undertake the construction of a palace for his sovereign. Thomas, in company

of this emissary, left by sea for India, which was reached after a rapid passage. Both proceeded to the Court, where Thomas made many converts, including Gondophares himself and his brother Gad, and ultimately died a martyr's death. That after so many centuries the actual existence of this king should have been proved by the discovery of his coins in India is most remarkable. The first specimens were found in Afghanistan by the American explorer Masson about the year 1833.

The name of Gad, Gada, or Guda, the brother of Gondophares, according to Christian tradition, is possibly contained in a hitherto unelucidated Kharoshthi legend on a rare type of coins of Orthagnes. The reign of Gondophares covers the middle of the first century after Christ. About this time were issued the very abundant copper coins of an anonymous king who called himself the King of Kings, the Great Saviour (*Soter Megas*). All bear a three-pronged symbol, the peculiar device of this ruler.

The invasion of the chiefs, conventionally known as Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian, preceded that of the Kushan leader, Kujula Kadphises. I have already stated that the first wave of invasion from Central Asia, that of the Saka Scythians, extinguished the Greek power in Bactria, and later on in the Punjab, and left just a remnant of Greek sovereignty in the Kabul Valley. All alike were swept away by the onrush of the Kushans. The work of conquest was continued by the second Kadphises, styled Vima Kadphises on his coins, who overran the whole of the Punjab and Northwestern India. The dominions of Greeks, Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians were extinguished, and Northern India came under the Kushan sway.

It is generally held that the successors of Vima Kadphises were Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasu Deva. An inscription recently discovered at Mathura, thirty miles north of Agra, confirms the existence of a king Vasishka between Kanishka and Huvishka, but his coins

have not been found, or possibly, still await identification. Of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises the only remains are their coins and the brief notices of the Chinese annalists; but of their successors, Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasu Deva, we possess many inscriptions, several of which are dated in an era which has been called the Vikrama Era. It may be remarked that there are a dozen different views regarding the date of Kanishka and the origin of the era. Some writers hold that Kanishka began to reign in A. D. 78. One authority places his initial date about A. D. 123, another as late as A. D. 278. On the other hand, Dr. Fleet held that the Kanishka group preceded that of Kadphises. The period covered by the reigns of the three monarchs, Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasu Deva probably exceeded a century and a half, and the Kushan sway at its zenith must have extended from Kabul to Bengal. The Kushan type of coin was perpetuated in Kashmir down to the sixteenth century of our era, a duration which I think

easily surpasses all records outside China; and Kushan copper coins and the derived types must have remained in common circulation for many centuries after the death of Vasu Deva.

It was in connection with the Buddhist faith that the memory of Kanishka was preserved by tradition, and the figure of Buddha appears on one gold and on a few copper coins. The wonderful relic casket unearthed near Peshawar bears an effigy of the great king Kanishka, and the Punjab Historical Society has published a photographic reproduction of the statue of Kanishka discovered a few years ago near Mathura. The coinage of the Kushans is very extensive in gold and copper, but only a single genuine silver coin is known and that was from a copper coin's die. It thus provides a striking contrast with the currency of the Indo-Bactrians, which is entirely lacking in gold. The coins of Vima Kadphises are bilingual, the Greek legend being quite legible and of some length. After his time the Kharoshthi language disappears

once and for all from the coinage, the only possible exception to this statement being a coin sketched in 1842 and subsequently lost. It was published by Cunningham in his work on the coins of the Great Kushans.

The money of the Kanishka group bears legends on both sides in legible Greek characters, but the kingly titles are usually Iranian. The Kushan gold coin is based on the Roman *aureus*. The entire coinage of Vima Kadphises is dedicated to Shiv, the third person of the Hindu Trinity, but the currency of Kanishka and Huvishka is adorned with the images and names of an extraordinary and extensive gallery of gods, goddesses and heroes with Greek, Indian and Iranian names. The full pantheon of some thirty deities is found on the gold issues of Kanishka and Huvishka. Like the Athenians of old, these Kushans were anxious to offer their devotion to all possible deities though they did not go so far as to dedicate a coin to the Unknown God. The gold coins of Vasu Deva gen-

erally give us a representation of Shiv; the copper issues have the standing king on one side, while on the other there is either Shiv and his bull, Nandi, or a seated goddess called Ardoksho. Vasu Deva was succeeded by obscure princes known as the Lesser Kushans, but after his time the design of the monetary issues becomes sadly debased and the inscriptions difficult to read.

At this point it is appropriate to give a short account of the earliest indigenous coins and then briefly to describe the various native issues down to the Mohammedan invasion. Reference will be restricted to the coins found in the Punjab and its vicinity, but will include some allusion to the Sassanian, Indo-Sassanian and White Hun pieces which are often found towards the North West frontier and in Kashmir.

The earliest coinages of the ancient world appear to have been mostly of silver and electrum (a mixture of gold and silver). The earliest coins of Lydia were made about 700 B. C. by impress-

ing small punches or stamps on thick globules or buttons of electrum. Indian silver coins, which are certainly as old as the most ancient silver Greek issues, are the punch-marked flat pieces of indeterminate shape, but generally approximating to rectangular, adjusted to a fixed weight standard of about 56 grains. They are common all over India.

The mode of fabrication is evident at once from an inspection of the coins. Silver was first beaten out into a sheet somewhat thinner than a quarter-dollar. Strips about half an inch in width were then cut off and each strip was divided into pieces of the same weight, approximately 56 grains, and a final adjustment of the weight was made by cutting small bits off one or more corners of the heavier blanks. The marks of the chisel still remain on the edges of the thicker pieces, which were broken off when the cut did not go clean through the strip of metal. It has been remarked that though the coins known as "punch-marked" are rude, ugly and without legends, and as a

rule not assignable to any particular kingdom or locality, they possess very special claims on the interest of the scientific numismatist as documents in the early history of coinage. They also appeal to the anthropologist as authoritative records of the religious, mythological and astronomical symbolism current throughout India for many centuries.

The term "punch-marked" adopted by general consent means that the devices on the coins are impressed, not by means of a die covering the entire *flan* but by separate punches applied irregularly on the surface. They often interfere with one another and in some cases are so numerous as to result in a confused jumble. Each of these marks may have been the special sign of some money-changer or tester, or of some locality. But this conventional explanation is not sufficient, because we ought to find more punch-marked coins in the earlier stages of their manufacture—that is to say, exhibiting not more than one, two or three marks. I have scarcely ever seen a coin

which was not approximately covered with marks. It seems clear, therefore, that the surface must have been fairly well covered before a piece was released for circulation, and as a rule the marks are all different. Little difficulty is experienced in distinguishing the obverse from the reverse because the former contains several marks, while the latter is sometimes blank and is rarely distinguished by more than one device. More than three hundred different marks have been distinguished.

It is difficult to say how old these punch-marked coins may be. They are alluded to in the Laws of Manu and even then they are called old. The Jataka stories speak of these coins as being current in the time of Buddha, that is, the sixth century B.C. In the early Greek money we have the youth of coinage, but in the punch-marked pieces of India we see money in the very infancy of the numismatic art. There is an allusion to Indian money in the record of Alexander's invasion of the Punjab.

Quintus Curtius, describing the reception of Alexander by Omphis, king of Taxila, says that the Indian ruler presented golden crowns to Alexander and his friends in addition to eight talents of coined silver. As gold was available, it is curious that the punch-marked coinage should consist only of silver and of copper. I think that the punch-marked series of the size and weight just described was intended to be an all silver currency. The true copper punch-marked coins are thick, massive pieces, which are very much rarer than the silver coins.

The Indian monetary system was essentially original. It differed from the Greek and from all other systems in its unit of weight as well as in its scheme of values. The unit of weight is the *rati*, the scarlet and black seed of the *Abrus precatorius*, the Indian liquorice, sometimes called the red-bead vine; and these seeds can be seen in use at the present day in any Indian goldsmith's shop. A single seed weighs something over $1\frac{3}{4}$ grains and the whole of the Indian money pro-

ceeds by multiples of this well-known unit. There can be no doubt that the Indian monetary system is the invention of the Hindu mind.

In addition to the punch-marked coins there are the thick copper coins of Taxila with an elephant on one side and a lion on the other, which were the prototype of the square Indo-Bactrian issues. These are true coins with an impression on each side. We also have massive rectangular pieces with blank reverses which are held to be more ancient than the foregoing, and go back to at least 350 B. C. They differ from the Greek money in every single point, being square in form, different in standard and Indian in type. They are utterly without inscriptions and must be regarded as a purely indigenous currency. It is a pity that we cannot point to definite coins as being issues of the famous Mauryan king Asoka, but the absence of legends makes the attribution impossible. The earliest gold coins of Northern India are one or two small pieces which were probably struck at

Taxila and bear the peculiar symbol which Sir Alexander Cunningham called the Taxila mark. The site of Taxila is twenty miles northwest of Rawalpindi in the Northwest Punjab and is being excavated with most valuable results by Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology in India.

The holy city of Mathura (Muttra) is between Delhi and Agra, thirty miles north of the latter city, and ancient coins are found in considerable numbers beginning with the drachms of Menander and Apollodotos. The copper coins of the Kushans are abundant and there can be no doubt that Mathura belonged to their dominions; Ptolemy includes Mathura in the lower Punjab. The monetary issues of Mathura include coins of Indian rajahs of an indigenous type which are probably earlier than the coins of the Mathura satraps with Persian names. The most ancient of these foreign satraps seem to be the brothers Hagāna and Hagamāsha. Hagamāsha was probably followed by Rajuvula, whose son was

Saudāsa. Rajuvula struck drachms in base silver resembling and associated with the coins of the Indo-Bactrian prince Strato II, as well as bronze coins after the manner of the rajahs. Mr. Vincent Smith places Rajuvula and Saudāsa somewhere about 125-100 B. C.

The Taxila and Mathura coins are local issues. Though none of them bears the name of Taxila or of Mathura there can be no hesitation in assigning them to those places because they are not found elsewhere. Other ancient Indian coins are distinguished by the names of the tribes which struck them and so may be called tribal issues. Well-known tribal coins of the Punjab are those of the Odumbaras, Kunindas and Yaudheyas, who struck money in silver and copper, the silver coins being derived from the Indo-Bactrian drachms. The Yaudheyas were one of the most famous tribes of ancient India and were specially noted as warriors, their name being derived from the Sanskrit *yudha*, battle. They are mentioned by the grammarian Pānini,

who lived before the time of Alexander, as one of the warlike peoples of the Punjab, and they occupied the country on both banks of the River Sutlej.

To sum up, die-struck coins essentially original in form, design and size, existed in India before the invasion of Alexander the Great in 326 B. C. The Greek and Indian types of money mutually influenced one another as shown in the adoption by the Greeks of the Indian square shape and weight standard, and by the Indians of the drachm form and Greek artistic designs.

There can be little doubt that the Kushan empire endured till the third century after Christ, but the history of that century is wrapped in obscurity. We know, however, that in its latter part a chieftain named Gupta ruled in Bihar, his capital being in the vicinity of Patna. In the year 320 the throne was occupied by his grandson, Chandragupta I, who must be regarded as the real founder of the fortunes of his house. This chief established a special era, known in after-

times as the Gupta Era; and many of the inscriptions and coins of his successors are dated in this era. It continued in use in parts of northern and western India as late as the thirteenth century

After a brief reign Chandragupta transmitted the crown to his son, Samudragupta, who at once entered on a career of aggressive conquest. After reducing the princes of Upper India, he turned his victorious arms against his southern neighbours, and celebrated the attainment of paramount power by the performance of the *asvamedha*, or horse sacrifice. After a long and prosperous reign, during which the River Narbada became the southern frontier of the Gupta empire, Samudragupta passed away and was succeeded by Chandragupta II about the year 375. Under this rule the Gupta empire reached the zenith of its power. He attacked, defeated and slew the satrap Rudrasimha, ruler of Kathiawar, and so extinguished the foreign Saka Scythian dynasty of the Western Satraps, which had lasted for four centuries. The Punjab

did not form an integral part of the Gupta empire, but there can be no doubt Gupta power and influence extended as far as Lahore. Six years ago a find of Gupta gold coins was made in the Hissar district of the Punjab province.

The Gupta currency is essentially a gold issue derived through the gold coinage of the Kushans from the Roman *aureus*. Silver and copper money of the Guptas is scarce and unknown before Chandragupta II. On the annexation of Gujarat and Kathiawar he recognized the convenience of the small silver currency of the Western Satraps, based on the Indo-Bactrian drachmas, and imitated it closely.

About 413 A. D. the empire passed into the hands of Kumaragupta I, son of Chandragupta II. This monarch during most of his long reign enjoyed undiminished power, but towards its close he was troubled by an invasion of the White Huns, which was repelled by his son Skandagupta. The latter, who acceded in 455, reigned till about 480. The in-

cursions of nomad tribes from beyond the northwest frontier gradually shattered his power, and on his death the empire perished. Remnants of the dynasty survived in the eastern provinces for several generations.

I have already shown that the Greek power in India was shattered by the invasions of Asiatic hordes—Scythians, Parthians and Kushans. The Huns appear on the scene in the fifth century after Christ. These barbaric Huns in their migration westwards divided into two main streams, one directed towards the valley of the Oxus and the other to that of the Volga; the former were known as Ephthalites, also by the name of White Huns.

The tribe of Ephthalites was of considerable importance in the history of India and Persia in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era. The name Ephthalite is an attempt to reproduce the original name of the race, which was also called White Hun, because its members were of a comparatively fair appearance. In India they

were called Hūnas. Our earliest information about the Ephthalites comes from the Chinese chronicles, which state that they were originally a tribe of the Great Yue-chi, that is to say, they belonged to the same stock as the Kushans and lived to the north of the Great Wall. About the commencement of the fifth century after Christ they began to move westwards and for the next century and a half they were a menace to Persia, which they continually and successfully invaded though they never held it as a conquest. The Ephthalites defeated and killed the Sassanian king Firoz in A. D. 484, and the Persians were not quit of the White Huns until 557, when Anurshirwan (Khusru II) destroyed their power with the help of the Turks, who now make their first appearance in western Asia.

The Huns who invaded India appear to have belonged to the same race as those who molested Persia. The headquarters of the horde were at Bamian and at Balkh, the ancient capital of Bactria, and from these points they raided towards the

south. As already related, Skandagupta repelled an invasion, but the defeat of the Persians in 484 stimulated the Huns, and at the end of the fifth century their chief, Toramana, penetrated as far as Malwa in Central India and held it for some time. His son Mihirgul, or Mihirakula (c. 510-540), made Sakala (Sialkot) in the Punjab his Indian capital, but the cruelty of his rule provoked the Indian princes to combine and attack him about the year 528. He took refuge in Kashmir, where after a few years he seized supreme power and attacked the neighbouring kingdom of Gandhāra, perpetrating terrible massacres. He died about 540 and shortly afterwards the Ephthalites collapsed under the attacks of the Turks.

Our knowledge of the Indian Hūnas is chiefly derived from coins, from a few inscriptions, and from the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim, Hwen Tsang, who visited India just a century after the death of Mihirakula. The accounts of the Ephthalites dwell on their ferocity and

cruelty; they are represented as delighting in massacres and torture. The patron deity of Mihirakula, as clearly shown on his coins, was Shiv the Destroyer, and he acquired the reputation of a ferocious persecutor of Buddhism. Greek writers give a more flattering account of the Ephthalites, and these opinions were probably the basis of Gibbon's verdict when he described the White Hun as "a polite and warlike people who had vanquished the Persian monarch and carried their victorious arms along the banks, and perhaps to the mouth of the Indus." Nothing whatever is known of their language, but it is held to have been allied to Turkish. The White Huns were more barbarous than the Kushans and do not seem to have acted as other than a destructive force.

The Ephthalites were content to re-strike or imitate the coins of the countries which they overran. The silver coins, which are very much scarcer than the copper, are large thin pieces of the Sassanian model and as far as portraiture

is concerned are little more than examples of calculated frightfulness. Many of the White Hun pieces are anonymous, but are usually distinguished by a peculiar mark which Cunningham called the Ephthalite symbol.

After the extinction of the White Hun power in the middle of the sixth century, it seems likely that the Lesser Kushans again possessed the Punjab for about three hundred years, as we find more and more debased types of coinage which are quite illegible but are still to be recognised as descended from those of the Great Kushans and of the Sassanians. I may instance the ubiquitous *gadhiya paisa*, or ass money.

In the ninth century we again get coins bearing distinct names, the well-known "bull and horseman" silver currency of the dynasty commonly called the Hindu kings of Kabul. The coins show a *couchant* bull on one side, and on the other a fully caparisoned warrior mounted on his charger. The name of the king is in Nagari characters over the bull. Copper

pieces are of the "elephant and lion" type, both animals being heraldic in design. The coinage of Samanta Deva is extremely common in the Punjab. These types continued till the conquest by the Ghaznavis early in the eleventh century and the "bull and horseman" type was perpetuated by these Mohammedan conquerors.

The Maharajahs of Kashmir issued very degraded copies in copper of the Kushan money, which occupy the period from the sixth to the sixteenth century—a wonderful instance of persistence of type.

In the United Provinces and Central India we have debased imitations of Sassanian coins without legends in silver and copper. There is one common issue with a representation of the boar incarnation of Vishnu and the title *Srimad Adi Varaha*, which we know was borne by Bhoja Deva, king of Kanauj, in 850-900 A. D. From the tenth century there are the abundant mixed metal and copper coins of the "bull and horseman" type in-

vented by the Hindu kings of Kabul which were struck by the Rajputs of Delhi, Ajmer and Kanauj. In Western and Southern India are the mediæval coins of the kingdoms of Vijayanagar and Mysore.

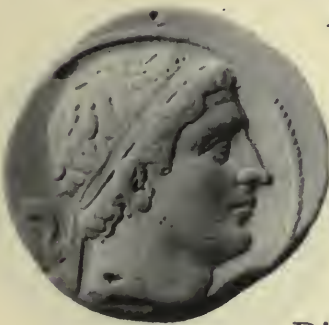
We have now reached the commencement of Mohammedan rule in India and with it the end of that obscure period in which coins have actually created so much history.

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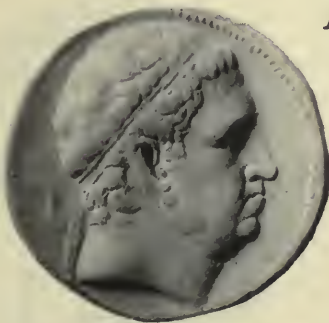
Diodotos

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Demetrios



Euthydemos II



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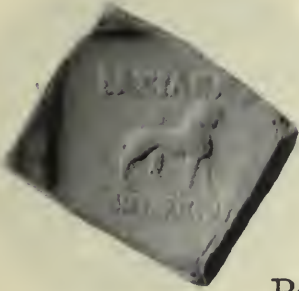
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Agathokles



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Pantaleon



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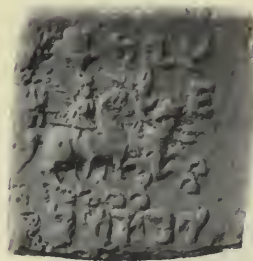
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Eukratides



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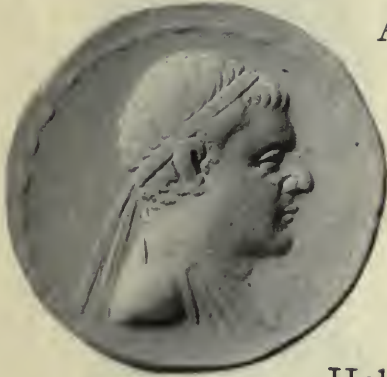


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Heliokles



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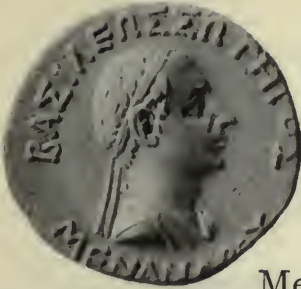
Heliokles



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Archebios



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Menander



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Menander



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Apollodotos



AE



Apollodotos



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Azes



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Spalahores & Spalagadames



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Gondophares



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Soter Megas

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Kadphises

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Kanishka

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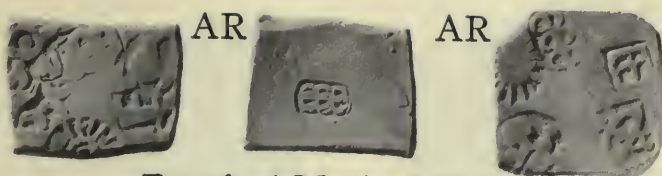


Huvishka

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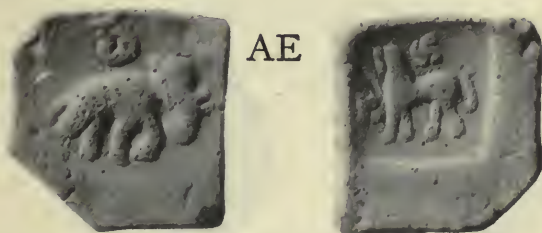
Vasu Deva



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Punched Marked Coins



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Taxila



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Amoghabuti of Kuninda



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Yaudheyas



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Chandragupta II



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Chandragupta II



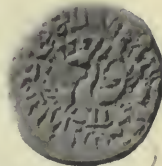
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Skandagupta



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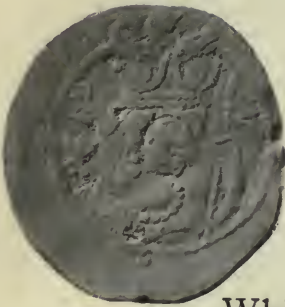


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White Huns

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White Huns

Billon

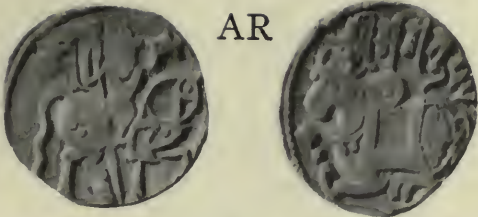


White Huns

Billon

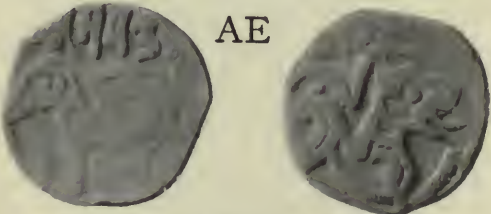


Gadhiya Paisa



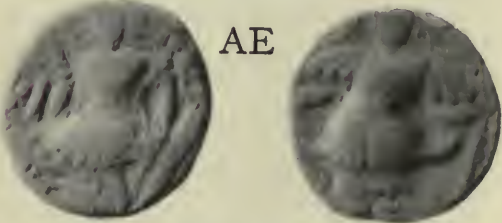
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Samanta Deva (Kabul)



AE

Samanta Deva (Kabul)



AE

Tetomana (Kashmir)



Billon

Srimad Adi Varaha

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