

## SECTION V

# PUNCH-MARKED COINS

## INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH the coins known as 'punch-marked' are rude and ugly, bear no legends, cannot be precisely dated, and, as a rule, are not assignable to any particular State 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 symbolism—religious, mythological, and astronomical—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 face (*flan*) of the coin, but by separate punches applied irregularly at various points on the surface. Naturally the impressions so effected often interfere with one another, and in cases where they are numerous the result is a confused jumble of symbols. Ordinarily, no difficulty is experienced in distinguishing the obverse from the reverse, the former being occupied by the larger symbols, commonly numerous, and the latter being sometimes blank, more often marked by a single minute device, and not infrequently marked by two or three comparatively inconspicuous devices. The cases in which both sides are crowded with symbols are rather rare. Examples will be found in Nos. 52–8 of this catalogue.

Mr. Theobald has been at the pains of enumerating more than three hundred different devices found on punch-marked coins. Examination of about one hundred and fifty specimens in detail resulted in proof that 'ninety-six symbols are confined to the obverse area, twenty-eight to the reverse, while fifteen symbols occur on both sides'. On the obverse the average number of symbols is about five, whereas on the reverse the average does not exceed two.

The devices are classified by Theobald under six heads, namely, (i) the human figure; (ii) implements, arms, and works of man, including the *stūpa* or *chaitya*, bow and arrow, &c.; (iii) animals; (iv) trees, branches, and fruit; (v) symbols connected with solar, planetary, or Sivite worship; (vi) miscellaneous and unknown.

The human figure rarely occurs, but the following catalogue offers good examples in Nos. 37-40 and 106 (Pl. XIX, 3, 12). The *chaitya* or *stūpa* is very common, and is one of the few symbols common to both obverse and reverse. Recent research has proved that the *stūpa* was used in ancient times by the Jains as freely as by the Buddhists; and it is no longer permissible to speak of this device as a 'Buddhist symbol'. Buddhism, however, was more widely diffused than Jainism during the period of the currency of punch-marked coins, and most of the *chaityas* on the coins probably were intended to have a Buddhist signification. The bow and arrow device is rare; as shown on No. 67 (Pl. XIX, 7) it is exactly the same as that seen on the Kolhāpur coins of the Āndhra dynasty issued between about 84 and 138 A.D. (Pl. XXIII). The punch-marked coin may be referred reasonably to the same period.

The animal devices are very curious and interesting. It is well known that up to comparatively recent times the rhinoceros was widely distributed in the Gangetic plain. The coins bear testimony to the fact that this great beast was a familiar object in ancient India. Three examples are recorded in the catalogue, Nos. 48, 58, and 59 (Pl. XIX, 5, 6). The last-mentioned coin was found in the Gayā District, Bihār. The elephant, of course, appears frequently. In most cases the representation is extremely crude, but the figure of the elephant saluting with uplifted trunk, as shown on a large oblong copper coin of very early date (No. 92, Pl. XIX, 10), is executed with considerable spirit.

The peacock, which performs a large part in Indian religious symbolism, is often seen, generally perched on a *stūpa* or *chaitya*. Nos. 24, 28, 31, 37 (Pl. XIX, 3), &c., offer illustrations. The long-necked crane or stork of No. 71 (Pl. XIX, 8) may be unique; the device is not included in Theobald's comprehensive list. The significance of the dog on the *stūpa* (No. 75) has been discussed by Thomas and Theobald. The representation of the sacred tank containing fish (No. 48, Pl. XIX, 5) is not very rare; and various fishes are often displayed independently, as on No. 10 (Pl. XIX, 1).

The collection now described does not seem to contain any example of the goat browsing on the vine, a device specially noted by Theobald; and the trees shown are usually conventional, as No. 18, &c. The palm-tree of No. 61 is rare, and seems to be intended to represent the coco-nut tree with its fruit (*Cocos nucifera*).

Solar symbols, including many varieties of wheel devices, as well as the *svastika* and *triskeles* or *triskelis*, are the most common of all, and, indeed, are seldom absent. The so-called 'taurine' symbol, a crescent on a circle, used in astrology to denote the zodiacal sign Taurus, is extremely common. Symbols of the astrological class rarely occur on the reverse, but examples are found in Nos. 21, 50, and 95. The figure resembling

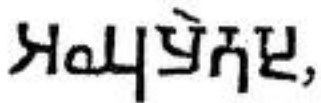
## SECTION VI

# LOCAL COINS OF NORTHERN INDIA

### INTRODUCTION

THE four groups of coins described in this Part have been classed together as being severally assignable to fairly definite localities in Northern India. The coins of each group are found predominantly in the districts named, and are not common elsewhere. The first definite step in such localization of the ancient coinages was taken by the publication in 1891 of *Coins of Ancient India* by Sir Alexander Cunningham, the greatest Indian numismatist since James Prinsep. Sir Alexander's unique experience extending over considerably more than half a century enabled him to accumulate a mass of knowledge, both general and special, concerning all classes of Indian coins, which nobody can hope to rival. Although he published comparatively few details about the *provenance*, or find-spots, of individual coins, his general statements on the subject are of the highest value. His announcement, for instance, that all the coins figured in Plate IX of the work above referred to were obtained at Ajodhyā, furnishes a secure basis for the classification of many pieces which would otherwise embarrass the numismatist. In the same way the assignment of the other classes of coins treated in this section to Avanti, Kosam, and Taxila respectively rests primarily upon Sir Alexander Cunningham's unequalled personal knowledge of the distribution of Indian coins. As Professor Rapson has pointed out, the hope of further advance in our knowledge of the ancient currencies of India depends largely on recognition of the local limits of each class of coin. It is very unfortunate that the recorded information about the find-spots of coins is so scanty, but it is some satisfaction to be able to assign even a few groups to their proper local position. Coins of copper, including bronze of sorts, do not, as a rule, wander very far from their place of issue, and, inasmuch as nearly all the ancient Indian coins may be classed under the heading 'copper', evidence of their *provenance* goes a long way towards determining approximately the locality of their mints.

all belonged to a single 'Mitra dynasty'. Nor is there any sound reason for identifying the Rājās who issued the incuse coins with the Śunga dynasty of the Purāṇas. The Pañchāla coins will be treated in Section VIII.

I regret that I am unable to agree with Professor Rapson in his reading of the name on the coins of Ayu-mitra of the 'cock and bull' type. 'The inscription on these coins,' he observes, 'seems not to be *Suya-*, *Saya-*, or *Āyu-mitasa*, each of which readings has been suggested, but almost certainly *Āyyamitrāsa* (i.e. *Āryamitrāsa*). The description of this coinage given in *Indian Coins* (Pl. IV, 3), should probably be corrected accordingly; but it must be borne in mind that the letters *a* and *su* at this period [*scil.*? 2nd or 1st century B. C.] are very easily confused' (*J. R. A. S.*, 1900, p. 100). I have examined many of these coins in much better preservation than those now catalogued, and am convinced that the true reading is *Ayu* (or possibly *Ayū*). The form of initial *A* on these 'cock and bull' coins is quite distinct from *sa*. I doubt if *su* occurs. It seems to me absolutely impossible to read the first word in the legend of Pl. XIX, 17 as *Āyya*. The legend is , and I do not see how the *y* with the long tail can be read as double *y*. The *u* is formed in the ordinary way by the prolongation downwards of the vertical stroke of the *y*. I do not see any reason for reading *Ā*. Of course there is a difficulty in accepting and explaining a non-Sanskrit word like *Ayu*, but we must take the legend as it stands. I am disposed to think that the 'cock and bull' coins of Ajodhyā are not of such early date as has been supposed, and that they may well be as late as the second century A. D. Mr. Carlleyle regarded Ayu-mitra as the latest of the dynasty, 'as the letters of the legend belong to the later Gupta period' (*J. A. S. B.*, 1880, part i, p. 27); but I do not think the coins are later than 150 A. D., and they may be earlier.

#### AVANTI

These coins, described by Cunningham under the name of Ujjain, are better referred to the country Avanti, of which Ujjain (lat. 23° 11' 10" N., long. 75° 51' 45" E.) was the most notable city. They come not only from Ujjain itself, but from Eraṇ, Besnagar, and other towns of Avanti. Professor Rapson has suggested that the so-called 'Ujjain symbol' of the cross and balls would more accurately be named the 'Mālava symbol', and there is no doubt that the proposed term would be the more accurate, but I have thought it better to retain the more familiar expression.

The legend on No. 27 (Pl. XX, 3), which seems to read *Runamisa* or *Runamāsa*, is puzzling. The two-horned rhinoceros on No. 28 is interesting. It is very curious to notice how the devices used on the punch-marked coins are combined on the dies of the Ujjain coins,

the animals and symbols characteristic of the earlier series being repeated on the later. But the two-horned rhinoceros is represented only on No. 28. The animal depicted on the punch-marked coins and on an Ujjain coin in Mr. Theobald's cabinet (*J. A. S. B.*, 1890, part i, p. 218) is single-horned, either *R. indicus*, or the lesser species, *R. Sondaicus*, the range of which extended to the Panjāb as late as the time of Bābar.


#### KŌSAM

The catalogue includes only four coins which can be referred with certainty to the ancient city of Kōsam on the Jumna, about thirty miles south of west from Allahabad, which is recognized by the Jains as Kauśāmbī, but undoubtedly is not the Buddhist Kauśāmbī of the Chinese pilgrims in the fifth and seventh centuries A. D. (*J. R. A. S.*, 1898, p. 503). The most ancient piece evidently is the circular cast coin No. 4, which has been known for a long time. Cunningham possessed seven specimens, six of which came from Kōsam, and the seventh from Bithā, not far distant. These coins may be assigned to the second or third century B. C.

Bahasati-mitra (Brihaspati-mitra) is inaccurately called Bahasata by Cunningham. Fifteen of his coins are in the Lucknow Provincial Museum, of which nine were excavated at Kōsam in 1887, and six at Rāmnagar (Ahichhatrā) in Rohilkhand in 1891. The genealogy given in an inscription at Pabhosā near Kōsam shows that the grandfather of Bahasati-mitra was King Bhāgavata, son of Vamgapāla, king of Adhichhatrā or Ahichhatrā. The dynasty at Kōsam is thus proved conclusively to have been a branch of that of Adhichhatrā, and the occurrence of Bahasati-mitra's coins at both Kōsam and Rāmnagar is explained (see *Ep. Ind.*, ii. 243). The late Mr. Rodgers had two small brass coins (diam. .7 and .55) of the Northern Satrap type with the imperfect legend *Baha-* in early characters, which possibly may have been another issue of the Bahasati-mitra of Kōsam and Ahichhatrā. The Kōsam coins of Jeṭha-mitra made known by Cunningham also are related to the Northern Satrap series. During one visit to Kōsam Cunningham obtained sixteen coins of Bahasati-mitra, one of Aśvaghosha, three of Jeṭha-mitra, and two of Deva-mitra (*Reports*, x. 4).

The coins of this Deva-mitra have not been published, so far as I know, and I cannot say whether or not he was identical with the Deva-mitra of the Ajodhyā 'cock and bull' type (Pl. XIX, 18). I doubt if the 'cock and bull' type coins ever occur as far west as Allahabad. They are frequently found in Oudh, Gorakhpur, and Bastī.

The coin of Pavata (Pārvata) is new. The only other known specimen, formerly in my cabinet, is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

Serial No.	Museum	Metal, Weight, Size	Obverse	Reverse
20	A.S.B.	Æ 50.3 -6	Seated figure, perhaps intended for Lakshmi; in poor condition.	'Ujjain symbol' with a dot in each circle.
<i>C. Animal type</i>				
21	A.S.B.	Æ 101.5 -6	Bull standing to r., with tree in railing in front, and solar symbol with broad arrow-heads above; (?) river below.	'Ujjain symbol' with plain circles.
22	"	Æ 89.6 -7	Similar; river distinct; worn.	'Ujjain symbol' with circle in each orb ( <i>C. A. I.</i> , Pl. X, 18).
23	I.M.	Æ brass 68.7 -6	Humped bull l., defaced.	'Ujjain symbol' with plain circles in square incuse.
24	A.S.B.	Æ 41.3 -55	Long-legged humped bull l., as on Nāga coins.	'Ujjain symbol' with plain circles.
25	"	Æ 29 -5	Ditto.	Ditto.
26	I.M.	Æ 34 -5	Ditto; much worn.	Ditto.
27	"	Æ 19.7 -45	Bull standing r.	Tree in railing; 'Ujjain symbol' with plain circles to r.; below, in early Br. characters, <i>Runamāsa</i> , or <i>Runamisa</i> , $\dagger \Delta \Psi$ (Pl. XX, 3).
28	"	Æ 29 -45	Two-horned rhinoceros standing r.; 'Ujjain symbol' above. 	Traces of 'Ujjain symbol'.
29	"	Æ 20.5 -53	Tusked elephant standing l.; six-rayed wheel (sun) above.	'Ujjain symbol' with inner circle and dot in each orb.
<i>D. Symbols type</i>				
30	A.S.B.	Æ 80.5 -65	Tree in railing, 'Ujjain symbol,' and other marks.	'Ujjain symbol' with inner circle to each orb ( <i>C. A. I.</i> , Pl. X, 15).
31	"	Æ 77.8 -77 x -65	Similar.	Ditto.

<sup>1</sup> The coin being worn, I give a sketch, instead of a photograph of a cast. The animal seems to be the *Rhinoceros Sumatrensis*, which is still found in Assam and Burma. The one-horned rhinoceros of the punch-marked coins (Pl. XIX, 5, 6) may be either *R. indicus* or *R. Sondaicus*. Mr. Theobald regards it as the latter. The late Mr. J. Cockburn 'came across an injured drawing of a two-horned rhinoceros' in a cave somewhere in the Kaimūr Hills which extend to the south of Allahabad (*J. R. A. S.*, 1899, p. 96). This fact indicates that the *R. Sumatrensis* once had a wider range in India than it now has, and helps to explain the appearance of the animal on an Avanti coin.

## PUNCH-MARKED



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## LOCAL (Æ)



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## PUNCH-MARKED COINS

SILVER AND COPPER

## LOCAL COINS

AJODHYĀ AND AVANTI