

appear to have been the product of one celator. Perhaps there was no great demand for Æ during the period of Azes' rule in the locality where these coins were circulating, or the need was already met by the coins still in circulation. These issues were replaced by the general recoinage of Azes bearing 'King Mounted right with Whip' issues and their standardised accompanying Æ issues.

MORE EARLY MEDIEVAL SILVER PORTRAIT COINS OF THE YASHAADITYA SERIES

By Pankaj Tandon¹⁹

In ONS 181, Wilfried Pieper²⁰ published a number of small, silver portrait coins reportedly from northern Pakistan, suggesting that they might be Hunnic issues from the 6th or 7th centuries, while acknowledging that the evidence in favour of this proposal was not definitive. Pieper divided his coins into two broad classes, those with a fire altar reverse, which were anepigraphic, and those with a trident reverse, which carried a legend in Brahmi around the trident. Among the latter types, Pieper was able to read the legend on some of the coins as *Sri Yashaaditya*,²¹ while remaining unable to read the legend on the others. He also attempted to begin a classification of the coins on the basis of the crown worn by the king on the obverse. In this brief note, I publish some more coins of this series. In so doing, I am able to tentatively identify one more king, publish the first known coins of the fire altar type that appear to carry a legend (of a possibly third king), strengthen Pieper's argument that the issuers of these coins were Huns or their immediate successors, re-examine the attribution of these coins to northern Pakistan, and begin an examination of a curious feature of the orientation of the reverse legend.

There are thirty three coins presented here (see the following Table 1).

Table 1: The 33 new coins²²



1 (#131.69)

0.63 gm, 9-10 mm, 6 o'clock

Single small dot in "open rectangle" crown, trident
tines straight and V-shaped



2 (#616.06)

0.66 gm, 11-12 mm, 9 o'clock



3 (#616.09)

0.93 gm, 11 mm, 8 o'clock

Almost full legend



4 (#616.10)

0.96 gm, 10-11 mm, 7 o'clock

Legend entirely above trident!



4 (#616.10)

0.96 gm, 10-11 mm, 7 o'clock

Legend entirely above trident!



5 (#616.11)

0.68 gm, 11 mm, 5 o'clock

No dots in crown



6 (#616.07)

0.62 gm, 11 mm, 3 o'clock

Sri before face!



7 (#616.20)

0.61 gm, 12 mm, 1 o'clock



8 (#I2019)

Details unavailable

¹⁹ I wish to thank Harry Falk for his insights into the readings and Wilfried Pieper for helpful comments and for permission to publish his coins.

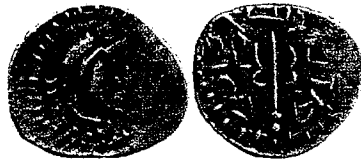
²⁰ Wilfried Pieper: "New Types of Early Medieval Silver Portrait Coins from Northern Pakistan", *ONS Newsletter* 181, Autumn 2004, pp. 17-20.

²¹ Pieper credited this reading to Harry Falk.

²² The number in parentheses after the # sign is my inventory number for the coin. Coins with the same three digits preceding the decimal point were acquired together as part of a group.



9 (#I2021)
Details unavailable
Bare head, no crown?



10 (#I645)
Details unavailable
Bare head, no crown?



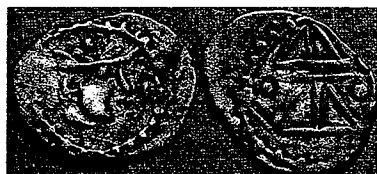
11 (#629.39)
0.61 gm, 11-12 mm, 3 o'clock



12 (#629.40)
0.74 gm, 11 mm, 3 o'clock
Legend before face



12 (detail)
Detail of Legend: Sri Suma ?



13 (#630.07)
0.58 gm, 10-12 mm, 5 o'clock



14 (#630.01)
0.57 gm, 9-11 mm, 8 o'clock



15 (#630.02)
0.64 gm, 12-13 mm, 8 o'clock



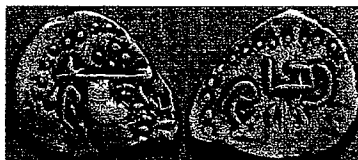
16 (#630.03)
0.71 gm, 12-13 mm, 5 o'clock



17 (#630.04)
0.73 gm, 11 mm, 4 o'clock



18 (#630.05)
0.67 gm, 11 mm, 5 o'clock



19 (#630.06)
0.90 gm, 10-12 mm, 12 o'clock



20 (#630.15)
0.80 gm, 11 mm, 6 o'clock



21 (#630.08)
0.59 gm, 10-12 mm, 5 o'clock



22 (#630.09)
0.57 gm, 10-11 mm, 8 o'clock



23 (#630.10)
0.56 gm, 11-13 mm, 5 o'clock



24 (#630.11)
0.58 gm, 11 mm, 8 o'clock



25 (#630.12)
0.88 gm, 11-12 mm, 2 o'clock



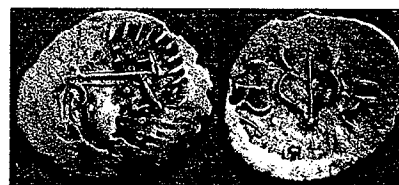
26 (#630.13)
0.70 gm, 10-12 mm, 2 o'clock



27 (#630.14)
0.59 gm, 11 mm, 1 o'clock



28 (#630.16)
0.61 gm, 11-12 mm, 7 o'clock



29 (#630.17)
0.65 gm, 12-14 mm, 2 o'clock



30 (#631.1)
0.69 gm, 11 mm, 8 o'clock



31 (#631.2)
0.69 gm, 12 mm, 3 o'clock



32 (W. Pieper)



The first of these I acquired from Bob Senior in 1999, with no provenance available. Senior had merely classified the coin as "post-Gupta," and I had placed it in my collection following the coins of Vallabhi, on the basis of the trident on the reverse. This is coin 1 in the Table. The next six coins (numbers 2-7) I acquired last year in the trade market, and these almost certainly come from the same hoard as did Dr Pieper's coins. Coins 8-10 are coins that I had seen on offer; again, they come from the same source as the others and are likely also from the same hoard. Coins 11 and 12 were acquired from a different source at the recent New York international coin show (January 2008). Coins 13-29 were acquired after the first draft of this paper had been completed (February 2008) from the same source as coins 2-10. Coins 30 and 31 were acquired in March 2008 from a source on the internet. Finally, coins 32 and 33 are new coins from the collection of Dr Wilfried Pieper, who has kindly allowed me to publish them here.

Coins 1-5, 8 and 19-29 all appear to carry the reverse legend *Sri Yashaaditya*, and are therefore likely issues of that same king, or the same dynasty if "Yashaaditya" is not a personal name, but rather a ruler's title. I think this is not impossible, considering the very large number of different dies and reverse types we have already seen. The name Yashaaditya means "the sun or glory of

fame or honour," so this could well be an epithet and also a name. The legends on coins 6 and 7 are not absolutely clear, but they may also be coins of Sri Yashaaditya.

New King Identified

Coins 9, 10, 14-18, and 30-32 carry a different legend. I believe it is the same one as on Pieper's Type 13. The reading of this legend has proven to be extremely difficult. Above the trident is clearly the word *Sri*, written on its side as on the Yashaaditya coins. There are then four additional letters arranged around the trident, in much the same way that the four letters *ya*, *shaa*, *di* and *tya* were arranged in the Yashaaditya coins. Sometimes the letters are clockwise, sometimes anti-clockwise, sometimes they remain vertical throughout, while at other times they are turned upside down. In Table 2, I present the letters one by one from all eleven specimens known to me – the ten from Table 1 and coin 13 from Pieper's ONS 181 article.²³

Table 2: Letters of the new legend

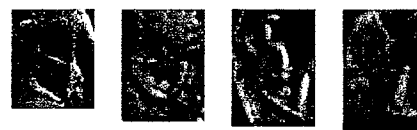
Coin #	Letter 1	Letter 2	Letter 3	Letter 4
9 #I2021				
10 #I645				
14 #630.01				
15 #630.02				
16 #630.03				
17 #630.04				
18 #630.05				
30 #631.1				

²³ In presenting these individual letters, I edited the photos slightly to eliminate vestiges of markings that clearly belonged to other letters in order to focus attention on the letter in question. The original coin photos in Table 1 have not been edited in any way and therefore can be used for reference.

31
#631.2



32
(Pieper)



ONS
181
#13



The table shows that, while three of the letters (the first, third and fourth) maintain a fairly consistent form and can therefore be read, the form of the second letter seems to fluctuate quite widely, rendering a reading quite difficult. Things are further complicated by the fact that, on quite a few coins, the second letter is very indistinct or off the flan. In any event, the first letter is clearly *pra*, the third letter seems to be *tu*, and the fourth letter can be read as *nde*, where the *n* and *d* are hard, dental retroflex consonants. The stem *tunde* means "beak" or "mouth." The second letter could be *ca*, *bha*, *bhu*, *ru*, *va* or possibly *sha*. For the sake of having a specific name, I am reading the legend as *Sri Pracatunde*, knowing full well that this reading is highly tentative and subject to change when better specimens emerge. Unfortunately, I could not discover a meaning for the stem *Praca*, which leaves me feeling quite insecure about this reading. *Prabhutunde* seems like an attractive reading with a clear meaning; however, the letter forms for the second letter do not look much like *bhu*. Harry Falk had tentatively suggested²⁴ *Sri Phrashaunde*, but this is also quite unlikely and I believe Professor Falk would concur. In his opinion, whatever the name is, it sounds like a "foreign," perhaps Hunnic, name. In any event, we will need to wait for better specimens to render a definitive reading.

Several of the *Pracatunde* coins (coins 9, 10, 14, 15 and 32) feature a king's bust that is bare-headed and, in particular, without the "open rectangle" crown seen on many of the *Yashaaditya* coins.²⁶ This is a feature unique to the *Pracatunde* coins, as I am not aware of any *Yashaaditya* coin with a bare head. However, not all *Pracatunde* coins have this feature, as coins 16-18 and 30-31 have busts topped with rectangular crowns.

It is natural to wonder about the chronological order of the *Yashaaditya* and *Pracatunde* coins. We get a possible hint of an answer to this question in coins 19 and 20. These are both coins carrying the legend *Yashaaditya* with the four-dotted rectangular crown, but with an interesting addition: they both carry the *Brahmi* letter *Pra* in front of the face on the obverse. The form of the letter matches perfectly with its form in the *Pracatunde* coins. It therefore seems reasonable to surmise that this *Pra* stands for the name *Pracatunde*, and that these coins mark a transitional period between the coins of *Yashaaditya* and *Pracatunde*. *Pracatunde* might have been a viceroy or satrap of *Yashaaditya*, or perhaps he was his son, wanting to continue to honour his father by issuing coins in his name while stamping them with his initial to begin to establish his legitimacy.

Four Coins of the Fire Altar type

Coins 11, 12, 13 and 33 do not carry the trident on the reverse, but rather feature a fire altar, as in Pieper's types 2 and 3. On coin 11, the fire above the altar is represented by two nested triangles, giving the appearance of the pediment of a Greek temple. The

²⁴ Private communication.

²⁵ Private communication.

²⁶ This is also true of coin 13 in Pieper's ONS 181 article.

attendants on either side have become mere diamond shapes topped with round dots to suggest heads. Based on the degradation of the design, I would suspect this coin came after Pieper's coins 2 and 3.

Coin 12 is another fire altar type where the fire is represented by a vertically bisected triangular shape, similar to Pieper's coin 2. The attendants are, as in coin 11, represented by diamond shapes with dots above. But the coin has an important new feature: what appears to be a legend in front of the king's face on the obverse. Unfortunately, the legend is not very clear. My best guess in looking at the coin by itself is *Sri Suma*, although this is highly tentative. There is a very slim possibility that the *Su* is actually *Ya*, but no amount of trying on my part could suggest the next letter to be *sha* in order to make the legend *Sri Yashaa(ditya)*. More coins are needed to clarify this legend.

Coin 13 is an unusual type. The obverse bust is of the usual type with a single-dotted open radiate crown. There is a slight possibility of letters in front of the face, but I have not been able to read anything. The reverse, however, is quite unusual in that the altar shaft has transformed into a triangular shape much like the fire above it, and the attendants on either side have been reduced to mere dots! Because of the degraded design, I would assume this coin comes chronologically after the other known altar types.

Finally, coin 33 is similar to coin 13 in terms of its reverse design, which consists of two vertically bisected triangles stacked one on top of the other, representing the altar and the fire above, and dots on either side representing the attendants. But the obverse is similar to coin 12, with the turreted style of coin and a legend in front of the king's face. Dr. Pieper has read the legend as *Sri Bhanaga*, which is plausible. However, I would like to suggest that there is a possibility that the legend is the same as on coin 12. The letters are very similar, and the reverse designs are quite similar also. If these are the same legend, one possible reading is *Sri Bhima*. Again, more coins are needed for a definitive reading of these legends.

Attribution of the coins

Pieper attributed these coins to a Hun principality in northern Pakistan, on the basis of what he had been told about the find spot of the coins from his supplier. However, virtually all the apparently related issues that he pointed out suggest that the coins come from further south. Pieper mentions the following series of low weight silver coins:

1. The post-Gupta "3-dot" coins from the Punjab. Estimates of the date of these coins varies from the late 5th century (Mitchiner) to the early 9th century (Tye, and possibly Cribb).
2. The elephant coins with the legend *Rana Hastya* dating from the late 5th and early 6th centuries, and coming from Gujarat.
3. The portrait coins attributed to the Kalachuris of Mahismati, dating to the 6th and 7th centuries.
4. The 7th century portrait coins with the legend *Sri Rana Vighraha*, attributed to the Gurjaras of Broach.
5. The bilingual coins of the Gharlabids of Multan, dating from the 9th century.

There are no corresponding low weight silver coins from northern Pakistan, except for the very rare *Sri Rovina* coins published by Mitchiner in ONS 84. Thus the metrology of the coins seems to point to an origin further south than "northern Pakistan."

Further, Pieper pointed to different aspects of the design and iconography of the coins. In particular, the obverse of bust right and reverse of a trident encircled with a Brahmi legend is exactly the design of the Vallabhi coinage dating from the late 5th to the early 9th century. Once again, this points to a more southerly location.

To all of these factors, I have four more to add. Firstly, in private correspondence, Harry Falk informed me that the IndoSkript analysis of the paleography of the Pracatunde coins pointed to the area around Gujarat in the mid-6th century.

Secondly, coin 6 presented here features a stylised letter *Sri* in front of the king's face on the obverse. This feature calls to mind the late Sasanian and post-Sasanian coinage of Sind, where the same letter was placed in the same location.²⁷ That coinage dates from the 4th and 5th centuries.

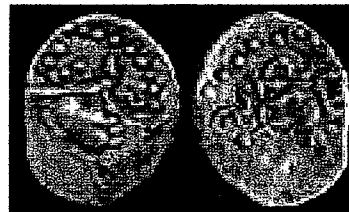
Thirdly, the style of the bust, particularly the cheek and neck, on this coin and on some others, such as coin 2 in the table, is very similar to the treatment of these features in the Ranaditya Satya coinage of Sind,²⁸ which I suspect follows immediately from the afore-mentioned Sasanian style coinage featuring the letter *Sri*.

On the basis of all of this evidence, I felt very sure that this coinage must have originated further south, most probably in Sind or perhaps even in Gujarat. I was planning to argue this, and planned to add that, even if a hoard of coins is found in one place, we cannot conclude that the coins originated in that place. The hoard of Diodotos staters found in Bihar recently in no way imply that they were minted there, rather than in Bactria. But I then uncovered a fourth, and possibly conclusive, piece of evidence. On an old, moth-balled computer that I no longer use, I dug up an old email from a source in Pakistan that I had received in January 2003, offering to sell me a hoard of 300+ small silver coins that had recently been "*found in Sind*" (emphasis mine). The email was accompanied by two photographs, reproduced here in Table 3.

Table 3



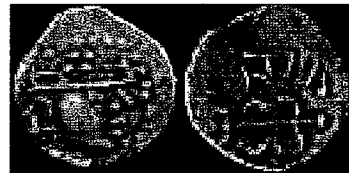
Original January 2003 photos



Coin 34: shape matched



Coin 35: shape matched



Coin 36: shape matched

²⁷ See R.C.Senior: "The Coinage of Sind from 250 AD up to the Arab Conquest", ONS Newsletter 129, June-July 1991, pp. 3-4.

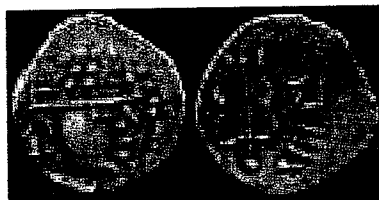
²⁸ Senior read the legend as *Rana Datasatya*, but a close examination of better specimens yields the reading *Ranaditya Satya*.



Coin 34: oriented



Coin 35: oriented



Coin 36: oriented

Clearly these coins belong to the same series and it is a virtual certainty that they belong to the same hoard as the Pieper coins, which were first reported to the South Asia Coins Discussion Group in July 2004. The information in my email obviously contradicts the information given to Pieper. I suspect the information I received, which was very soon after the uncovering of the hoard, is accurate. In any case, it clearly calls into question the assertion that the coins come from northern Pakistan.²⁹

My own best estimate for these coins is therefore that they were issued in Sind in the 6th century by a Hunnic or post-Hunnic minor dynasty. By the time the Arabs invaded Sind in the 7th century, we know that it was ruled by a Brahmin dynasty, so at some point in time there must have been a transfer of power, or the Huns must have completely co-mingled with the local population. The history of Sind is somewhat obscure in the 5th through 7th centuries, and many aspects of this coinage fit in neatly into this time frame.

Before moving on, I wish to take a bit of a look at the three coins imaged in my January 2003 email. It is safe to say that the two photos show the fronts and backs of the same three coins, as can be seen by the constructed photos entitled "shape matched" in Table 3. The ensuing three photos show the coins with reverses oriented correctly. We see that the first coin (Coin 34) is of Sri Yashaaditya, while the next two are coins of Sri Pracatunde. One point to note is that the Pracatunde coins show obverse busts topped by "open rectangle" crowns, similar to coins 16-18 from Table 1.

Observations on the Reverse design

A curious feature of these coins is the lack of consistency in the arrangement of the reverse legend. Let us first consider the placement of the title *Sri*. In almost all cases, the word *Sri* is placed horizontally above the trident, although even here we have one exception: coin 4 in Table 1 shows the *Sri* vertically to the left of the trident. But on the coins where the *Sri* is placed horizontally above the trident, it is sometimes oriented to be read from the left, and at other times to be read from the right. Of the 12 coins published by Pieper (3 are excluded as they were anepigraphic

altar types) and the 29 more published here in Table 1 (excluding coins 4, 11-, 13, and 33, leaving 41 in all):

- 22 are oriented right,
- 10 are oriented left, and
- 9 cannot be read.

Quite clearly, the orientation of the word *Sri* does not have a consistent pattern.

Of the 32 coins where the orientation of *Sri* can be determined, the breakdown of *Yashaaditya* and *Pracatunde* coins also shows a consistent non-pattern. The 22 right-oriented coins break down as follows: 16 *Yashaaditya* and 6 *Pracatunde*. And of the 10 oriented left, the breakdown is: 7 *Yashaaditya* and 3 *Pracatunde*. Put another way, of the 23 *Yashaaditya* coins, 16 have the *Sri* oriented right and 7 have the *Sri* oriented left; and of the 9 *Pracatunde* coins, 6 have the *Sri* oriented right and 3 have the *Sri* oriented left. In each case, roughly two-thirds of the coins have the *Sri* oriented right and one-third have the *Sri* oriented left.

Another aspect on which the reverse design is inconsistent is the direction of flow: clockwise or anti-clockwise. Moreover, there are coins on which the letters remain vertical throughout, and others where the letters turn upside down as they make their way around the coin. Finally, there are coins where the legend is meant to be read from the inside and others where it is meant to be read from the outside of the coin! Of the 34 coins for which I was able to clearly determine the location of the letters, I counted no less than 11 different legend arrangements! Of these, 21 are arranged clockwise, 6 are anti-clockwise, and 7 are neither, as they do not maintain a consistent circular flow. This lack of consistency in the legend arrangement makes the coins very difficult to read, and it takes some ingenuity to figure out accurately what is going on with the legend. The different arrangements, and the coins that conform to each, are shown in Table 4. Since the number of letters in the two legends, *Yashaaditya* and *Pracatunde*, is the same, it is possible to pool these two types together in the table. I have included coins from Pieper's ONS 181 paper, and those coins have been identified with a P preceding the coin number.

Table 4: Reverse legend arrangements

Letter number	1	2	3	4
Yashaa-ditya	Ω	Α	ζ	η
Praca-tunde	Η	Ϝ	Δ	Ϛ

Legend Arrangements				
Arrangement	Coins			Total
	(* means coin of Pracatunde)			
	Clockwise			
4 1	1, 5, 6, 9*, 10*, 14*, 23, 24,			12
3 2	25, 32*, P6, P13*			
† 1	8, 19, 26, 27, P7, P8			6
ε 2				
2 3	4			1
1 4				
Α -	7, P5			2
ω ∞				
Anti-clockwise				
1 4	3, 22, P4, P10, P12			5
2 3				
1 †	2			1
2 ε				

²⁹ To muddy the waters further, my source for coins 1-10 informed me the coins had been found in Baluchistan. I suspect this information is not very reliable.

Neither clockwise nor anti-clockwise

3 1			
4 2	15*		1
5 1			
6 2	17*, 18*, 31*		3
1 5			
2 6	30*		1
3 4			
1 2	21		1
3 4			
1 2	14		1

We see from the table that the clockwise arrangement, starting at 2 o'clock and ending at 10 o'clock, is the most common arrangement, as it is exhibited by 12 out of the 34 coins. But there is a bewildering array of alternative arrangements. This lack of consistency in the legend placement is quite remarkable and, I believe, unprecedented in Indian coinage. It points to the use of many die-cutters and therefore a possibly quite long period of time of issue. I suspect there is no other significance to this phenomenon other than the lack of attention to this detail.

One remaining question on the reverse legend arrangement is whether there is any correlation between the orientation of the word *Sri* and the arrangement of the legend. We might expect that the legend might be arranged clockwise, starting from 2 o'clock, if the *Sri* is oriented to be read from the right, and that the legend might be arranged anti-clockwise, starting at 10 o'clock, if the *Sri* is oriented to be read from the left. Sadly, there is no consistency here either. Of the 22 coins where the *Sri* is oriented to be read from the right, 18 do indeed have clockwise legends, but 4 have anti-clockwise legends. And, of the 10 coins where the *Sri* is oriented to be read from the left, only 2 have anti-clockwise legends, with the remaining 8 having clockwise legends. So the overall picture of a somewhat chaotic placement of the legend remains unchanged.

Conclusion

In summary, this note has shown that the medieval portrait coins of the "*Sri Yashaditya*" series exhibit considerably more variety than was first visible in Pieper's paper. We have a second (*Sri Pracatunde*?) and possibly a third (*Sri Bhima*?) king or family name and a wide variety of obverse and reverse types. I have further argued that the geographical location of the place of issue of these coins is further south than previously thought, perhaps in what is now the Pakistani province of Sind.

AN UNPUBLISHED COIN OF 'ALI MARDAN KHALJI

By S. M. Iftekhar Alam

On the eve of Ikhtiyar al-Din Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji's expedition to Tibet, he placed 'Ali Mardan in charge of the north-eastern region, Husam al-Din 'Iwad Khalji in charge of the western region and 'Izz al-Din Muhammad Shiran Khalji in charge of the south-western region of his dominion.¹

Shortly after Bakhtiyar Khalji's return to Deokot from the Tibet expedition he died a sudden death in 1206 AD. At the news of his death Muhammad Shiran Khalji, the governor of the south-western region left Birbhum and marched to Deokot in the north-eastern region, performed the mourning ceremonies, and from there further marched towards Naran-go-e (نارنگوئی), which was known as 'Ali Mardan's fief. Here he seized and imprisoned 'Ali Mardan, the alleged murderer² of Bakhtiyar. Then Shiran Khalji returned to Deokot where the Khalji nobles and soldiers present there at that time elected him as their leader. He assumed the rule

of the dominion of Lakhnauti keeping 'Ali Mardan in confinement under a kotwal³ named Baba, the Safahani [Isfahani].⁴

Muhammad Shiran Khalji, by following a policy of conciliation towards the supporters of 'Ali Mardan and by confirming his nobles in respectable positions, brought peace to the kingdom of Lakhnauti. But soon afterwards, 'Ali Mardan, by convincing Baba and with Baba's help⁵ as well, managed to escape from his confinement. 'Ali Mardan then went to the Delhi Sultan, Qutb al-Din Aibak, and instigated him to attack Lakhnauti.

Aibak ordered Qae-Maz-Rumi, the governor of Oudh, to attack Lakhnauti, resolve the disputes between the Khalji nobles and place them in their respective regions. In 1207 AD⁶ Qae-Maz-Rumi started for Lakhnauti. At first, 'Iwad surrendered to Qae-Maz without a fight. Then Shiran Khalji retreated from Deokot towards the further north-east. Qae-Maz then placed 'Iwad as the ruler of Deokot and started for Oudh. Hearing the news of Qae-Maz's return journey to Oudh, Shiran Khalji came back to Deokot with his army and attacked 'Iwad Khalji.

As 'Iwad was attacked, Qae-Maz quickly returned to Deokot and attacked Shiran Khalji. Defeated, Shiran fled towards Moseda Santosh where, according to Minhaj, Shiran Khalji was killed in the hands of his own nobles as a result of internal feuds among themselves. However, after the defeat of Shiran Khalji, 'Iwad was appointed the governor of Lakhnauti in 1208 AD. In the meantime, 'Ali Mardan had accompanied Qutb al-Din Aibak in his march upon Ghazni, had fallen a prisoner in the hands of Yalduz's partisans but had ultimately managed to return to Delhi after one year's stay at Ghazni. In recognition of his services and sufferings, Qutb al-Din appointed him governor of Lakhnauti⁷. In 1210 AD 'Ali Mardan took charge as governor of Lakhnauti from 'Iwad. But soon afterwards, in November 1210 AD, Qutb al-Din Aibak died in Delhi. A complicated situation arose due to internal conflicts for the throne of Delhi. At this critical juncture 'Ali Mardan assumed independence in Lakhnauti and struck coins in his name.

The above is a brief history of how 'Ali Mardan rose to the position of Sultan of Bengal after the death of Bakhtiyar Khalji. Of the above-mentioned events, 'Ali Mardan's escape from prison was very significant. Had Baba Kotwal not helped 'Ali Mardan escape from imprisonment, Khalji history in Bengal would have been different.

Anyway, after assuming independence, 'Ali Mardan issued silver and gold coins⁸ in his name taking the titles: *al-sultān al-mu'azzam rukn al-dunyā wa'l dīn abū'l muẓaffar 'alī mardān*.

A particular type of silver tanka of 'Ali Mardan is described below:



Obverse

Reverse

The coin weighs 10.5 g, and is 26 mm in diameter.

Obverse: Horseman holding a mace in his right hand while the galloping horse faces left. A word "Bābā" (بابا) is clearly written just behind the horseman. Margin: *Kalima Tayeba*. But the other part of the margin which usually bears the date is off the flan.

Reverse: السلطان المعظم ركن الدنيا والدين ابو المظفر علي مردان

This particular type of coin bearing the word Baba is hitherto unpublished. The obvious question is what Baba in this coin stands for. In Arabic, Baba means father (daddy) as well as pope – the head of the Roman Catholic church. Mentioning the Pope in 'Ali Mardan's coin is very very unlikely. So, by inscribing Baba