

The question not unnaturally arises: how is it that none of the Kanarese Pandits, attached to the office in which the text and translation of the Ātakūr inscription were first prepared for publication, detected and checked the misreading that was being made and the wrong that resulted from it? But a more special point is this: the case illustrates well how easy it may be, when once a particular reading and interpretation of an epigraphic record have been laid out, —especially when an analogous instance at once presents itself in apparent justification (I allude to a well-known occurrence in Marāṭhā history),— for subsequent examiners of the record to be unconsciously biassed by that reading and interpretation, and to be prevented from seeing that they may be improved.

J. F. FLEET.

HARSHAVARDHANA AND ŚILĀDITYA

Mr. Vincent Smith has kindly drawn my attention to the silver coins of Śilāditya, published by Mr. Burn in this Journal for 1906, pp. 843 ff. I am sorry that they escaped my memory at the time when I wrote the remarks on Harshavardhana's coins on pp. 94 and 106, where, of course, they should have been noticed. I hasten to repair the omission, all the more because, while not touching the question of the identity of Yaśodharman and Vikramāditya, they afford welcome evidence as to the existence of the "son" of Vikramāditya.

The correct attribution of these coins is not quite so simple as it may appear at first sight. Mr. Burn is disposed to attribute them to Harshavardhana. To myself that attribution is very doubtful. The title Śilāditya was not uncommonly assumed by, or given to, rulers of that (still very obscure) period. Hiuen-Tsang gives the title principally to Harshavardhana, but he mentions other rulers who also bore it. The assumption, now prevalent

among ourselves, that Śīlāditya was an official title of Harshavardhana, is entirely due to a false appreciation of the Chinese pilgrim's statement (Watters, i, 343). If it had been his official title, it is almost inconceivable that there should be no mention of it in Bāṇa's biography of the king, *Harṣa-carita*, nor in Harshavardhana's own charters, or elsewhere. There is simply no direct Indian evidence for it, either traditional or historical. All that Hiuen-Tsang's use of the title shows is that in Buddhist monkish communities Harshavardhana was known by that title. Before we can attribute the Śīlāditya coins to Harshavardhana, we must prove that he had assumed that title officially.

On the other hand, we have the definite traditional statement in the *Rājataranginī*, ch. iii, v. 330 (Dr. Stein's transl., vol. i, p. 98), that "Pratāpaśīla, also called Śīlāditya, (was) the son of Vikramāditya". The discovery of coins in the names of Pratāpaśīla and Śīlāditya is a striking confirmation of the truth of the old Indian tradition. Anyhow, this certainly is the only fair, *prima facie* conclusion. It has to be definitely disproved if it is to be rejected. In the meantime I submit that the attribution of both, the Pratāpaśīla as well as the Śīlāditya, coins to the traditional "son" of Vikramāditya must hold the field.

According to my tentative construction of the history, we have for Vikramāditya's successor the period from about 580 to 608 or 612 A.D., that is, from the death of Vikramāditya to the great victory, or to the coronation of Harshavardhana. This gives us a period from 26 to 32 years. The latest date of the Śīlāditya coins, as read by Mr. Burn, is 33. This creates no difficulty, for the exact length of the period is, of course, uncertain. But it seems desirable that the dates should be independently verified. Mr. Burn himself queries all his dates, except 31 and 33 on Nos. 11-13 (pp. 846-7), but the identity of the crucial figure for 30 (as seen, at least, on No. 15

of the Plate) is certainly doubtful. The traces, as seen on the Plate, might quite well be those of 10 or 20. Those of 31 on No. 14 of the Plate seem fairly clear; but how cautious one has to be about these indifferently preserved figures may be seen from Mr. Burn's own remarks on the figures 20 of No. 7 (p. 846) and 50 of Nos. 6 and 7 of the Plate (p. 849).

As to the single coin of Harśa, which Mr. Burn describes as doubtful, I do not suppose he would suggest its attribution to Harshavardhana. There is nothing in favour of it.

May I also venture to suggest a possible connection of the still unexplained *aulikara* crest of Yaśodharman (F.G.I., p. 151) with the curious crescent-like object on the head of the king on these coins?

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There is also a misprint on p. 92 which I failed to detect. In the extract from Mr. V. Smith's *Early History of India*, "Central Asian" should be "Central Indian", as the original has it.—I also wish to withdraw the footnote on p. 142. The true explanation (quite different from my own) of the term *vaśāt* and of the whole phrase, as Dr. Fleet kindly reminds me, was given by Kielhorn in *Ind. Ant.*, xix, 56–7. I regret that I had forgotten it.—Also, on p. 113, l. 1, 581 is a misprint for 587.

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A FOLK-TALE PARALLEL

Cryptic messages sent by artful young ladies are of frequent occurrence in Oriental stories. Colonel Phillott gives several instances in his *Note on Sign-, Gesture-, Code-, and Secret Language, etc., amongst the Persians*, in JASB., N.S., III, 619 ff. A well-known example will be found in the first story of the *Vēṭāla-pañcaviṃśatikā*