

**CATALOGUE OF COINS IN
THE PUNJAB
MUSEUM, LAHORE, VOL. I
INDO-GREEK COINS**

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(25)

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PANJAB MUSEUM, LAHORE

BY

R. B. WHITEHEAD

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE, MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
AND OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BENGAL

VOL. I

INDO-GREEK COINS

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PREFACE

THIS volume describes the Collection of Indo-Greek coins in the Lahore Museum, Panjab, India. I have applied the term Indo-Greek to the issues of the Greek Kings of Bactria and India, and of their contemporaries and immediate successors in North-West India, who struck money bearing legible Greek inscriptions. These were the Indo-Scythic and Indo-Parthian dynasties, and the Great Kushāns, down to and including Vasu Deva.¹

The coins in the Lahore Museum were contained in two separate Collections. One was the Government Collection proper, and the other was the Cabinet of Mr. C. J. Rodgers, a well-known figure in Indian numismatics, a Collection which was purchased by the Panjab Government. Mr. Rodgers prepared Catalogues under official auspices, both of the Government Collection and of his own Cabinet; and these were printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, in the years 1892 to 1894. Neither work was illustrated, a fact which has detracted much from their value.

In the Preface to one of the Parts of his Catalogue, Mr. Rodgers mentions the fact that at the beginning of his career as a coin collector, he specialised in the issues of the Indo-Greeks. But he found that they were so difficult to obtain, and that such a large outlay was necessary for their

¹ The epithet Indo-Greek, to be strictly accurate, is only applicable to the coins of the Greeks in India and on the Indian Frontier. It cannot cover the Kushāns, except in the abbreviated sense in which I have used it in the title of this work.

acquisition, that he turned his attention to Mughal coins, and left the ancient coins to his friend General (afterwards Sir Alexander) Cunningham. Nevertheless the Indo-Greek section of his Cabinet was not to be despised, and it was very strong in the copper series. The Government Collection contained some good Greek coins, and there were a few very fine specimens in a small but valuable supplementary Collection, which is described in the Government Collection Catalogue, and was apparently purchased en bloc, probably from Mr. C. J. Rodgers himself, by means of a special grant. Then there were also the coins purchased from time to time during the nineteen years which have elapsed since the production of Mr. Rodgers' Catalogue.

The Indo-Greek coins of the Bleazby Collection were purchased for the Lahore Museum in the year 1911. They cost £800, and this expenditure was met in equal shares by the Government of India, and by the Panjab Government. The splendid Collection of which they formed part, was made by Mr. G. B. Bleazby, late of the Financial Department of the Government of India, during a long career spent in North-West India.

It was felt that the time had arrived for the incorporation of all these coins into one combined Collection, and for the production of a new Greek Catalogue. I was asked to carry out this work. A new Catalogue of the combined Mughal coins in the Lahore Museum has been prepared simultaneously with this volume.

For convenience of treatment I have divided this work into three parts, to each of which I have written a brief Introduction. The first treats of the coins of the Greek Kings of Bactria and India. The second describes the issues of the Indo-Scythians and of the Indo-Parthians, and the third the coins of the Kushāns. The distinction between Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians is at present largely conventional. In Volume I of the recently-produced Indian

Museum Catalogue, Mr. Vincent Smith calls both dynasties Indo-Parthian.

The intrinsic interest of the coins described in this work is great, and they make a strong appeal to the favourable notice of collectors, especially to those belonging to that European nation which is the first to have accomplished from the sea what Greece did from the land, and so may be regarded as the legitimate successor of the Greeks in the Panjab. Mr. Stuart Poole remarked in his Preface to the British Museum Catalogue of the Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India, that few fields of numismatics offer richer material, historical, archaeological, 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. The names of Menander and Apollodotos are just mentioned by classical annalists, but those of the numerous other Indo-Greek princes are merely found on their coins, and till four years ago no other epigraphical evidence of their existence was known. But now we have the inscription at Besnagar in the Gwalior State, which relates that the stone pillar on which it is inscribed was erected by Heliodoros, son of Dion, a subject of the great king Antalkidas of Taxila, the ruler whose name is familiar from his coins in the form Antialkidas. This is one of the several remarkable discoveries recently made by the Archaeological Department of India.

The historical importance of these coins is not confined to the issues of the Greek princes. Our knowledge of the Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians, and Kushāns is again almost entirely derived from the study of their coins; and the interest is strengthened by the fact that the coins of the Indo-Parthians give us the name of Gondophares, known to Christian tradition as the Indian ruler under whom the Apostle St. Thomas was martyred. Then on the coins of the Kushāns we have the name of Kanishka, known to fame as the convener of the

fourth great Buddhist Council, the Council which gave consistency and official sanction to the doctrines of Northern Buddhism.

As regards the philological importance of the Indo-Greek coins, it must not be forgotten that they provided the key to the Kharoṣṭhi script. Many documents written in the Kharoṣṭhi character have been discovered recently by Sir Aurel Stein in Khotan. 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.

I have modelled this Catalogue on Professor Gardner's *The Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum*, which, though published in 1886, is still the best guide to the student. I have derived much assistance from the first volume of the Indian Museum Coin Catalogue, by Mr. Vincent A. Smith. This was published at the Clarendon Press in 1906. In the Introduction I have used material from my paper 'The Place of Coins in Indian History' (*Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*). I have been unable to arrange for a Kharoṣṭhi fount for the inscriptions in this language. The system of transliteration is that used by G. Bühler in his well-known palaeographical tables published in the *Grundriss der Indo-Arischen Philologie*.

It is hoped that the information contained in the Text will be found accurate and up to date. Points worthy of attention have been noticed in the body of the Catalogue. I have done my best to exclude forgeries. The one or two doubtful coins which have been included, are marked with an asterisk. The Catalogue contains lists of coins unrepresented in the Museum, which lists I have made as complete as possible. Supplementary Plates at the end of each Section contain reproductions of important and interesting coins which are absent from this Collection.

Owing to the comparatively small scope of this work,

I have thought it unnecessary to prepare any Index. The names of the rulers represented appear in the List of Contents. The Bleazby coins are distinguished throughout by the initials G. B.

All the work of preparation of the Catalogue has been done in the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, with the permission of Mr. G. F. Hill, Keeper of the Coins, and I desire to thank him and his colleagues for their kindness and help. I am especially indebted to Mr. J. Allan, who has generously placed the whole of his knowledge of these coins at my service, and whose intimate acquaintance with the bibliography of the subject has been essentially valuable. The Plates illustrating this work have been produced from casts by the collotype process at the Clarendon Press.

Professor E. J. Rapson and Dr. J. F. Fleet have kindly helped me in the elucidation of one or two difficult points. I am further indebted to Mr. J. Allan for reading through the proofs of this Catalogue. Finally, I wish to thank the Staff of the Clarendon Press for the promptitude and accuracy of their work.

R. B. WHITEHEAD.

BOOTLE RECTORY, CUMBERLAND,
August, 1913.