

Ibn Khaldun's inconsistent scepticism and rationality, rejecting some but not all forms of magic and sorcery, (p. 140) coupled with consistent religious faith is the leitmotif of Irwin's intellectual portrait drawn from "another planet". But is not this portrait consistent with the world of a medieval thinker? Would not any further rationalism be utter heresy? Ibn Khaldun's conditional rationality prompts Irwin to join those who reject the view of Ibn Khaldun as 'precursor' of modern ideas. In the epilogue, coming back to the perspective from "another planet" announced in his introduction, Irwin candidly and refreshingly admits that he could not always understand Ibn Khaldun. Although he was one of the most outstanding figures of his age, Ibn Khaldun's thoughts remained beyond the grasp of his contemporaries. Robert Irwin sees him as a strikingly bleak and lonely figure (p. 208), standing between the exceptional and the conventional, beyond categorisation. Irwin's portrait of the philosopher is beautifully written, intriguing, stimulating and movingly intimate. <da30@soas.ac.uk>

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TREASURE, TRADE AND TRADITION: POST-KIDARITE COINS OF THE GANGETIC PLAINS AND THE PUNJAB FOOTHILLS, 590–820 CE. By JOHN S. DEYELL. pp. 228. New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2017. doi:[10.1017/S1356186318000366](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186318000366)

This is an important new book that answers a long-standing question in Indian numismatic history: where is the coinage of the great Pūṣpabhūti king Harṣavardhana? The only known coinage of this illustrious king is a small silver issue modelled on Gupta/Maukhari prototypes.

Deyell did not set out to answer this question, but rather to study a series of base gold coins of a post-Kidarite style, showing a stylized king sacrificing at an altar on one side and a seated female deity on the other.<sup>1</sup> Sir Alexander Cunningham attributed these coins in 1894 to a "Naga" or "Karkotaka" dynasty of Kashmir. This dynasty is mentioned in the great history of Kashmir, the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, and some of the base gold coins in question name some of the kings, such as Durlabha and Pratāpa, who are mentioned in that text. Cunningham drew the seemingly natural conclusion that the coins belonged to the dynasty, and his attribution became the conventional wisdom about these coins. Some scholars, however, maintained uneasiness about this wisdom, as it appears that these coins are almost never found in the Kashmir valley. Further, they do not seem to belong to the same sequence as other known coins from Kashmir. Deyell decided that it was time to solve this puzzle.

The most significant part of Deyell's work was to identify the find spots of the coins. There are very few recorded hoards of these coins; most of the known examples have come to the coin market through chance discoveries or other unofficial channels, where the find spots are not made public. Deyell painstakingly recovered this information through extensive interviews with dealers in Pakistan and India and was able to construct maps showing where the coins are found. He discovered that only one hoard has ever been found in the Kashmir valley, and that hoard was discovered at a pilgrimage site where coins could easily have been carried from elsewhere. As for the rest, he discovered two

<sup>1</sup>Michael Mitchiner: *Oriental Coins and their Values: The Ancient and Classical World*, (London, 1978), types 3636–3660.

important facts: (1) coins naming the king Pratāpa are not found with the others but only in hoards by themselves; all these hoards come from the Gangetic plain, and (2) hoards of all the other types, naming the kings Durlabha, Namvi, Vighraha, Vinaya and Yaśo, are generally found in the Punjab foothills and the adjoining plains of Punjab and Gandhāra.

What do these findings tell us? First, they solve the long-standing puzzle of why these supposedly “Kashmir” coins seem not to belong to the sequence of other known coins from that area. Second, they tell us that, although they bear a resemblance of design with the other coins (what Deyell calls the DNVVY coins, from the initials of the kings), the Pratāpa coins are actually not part of the same series. Rather, they constitute a separate sequence deriving their design from the same late Kidarite prototypes. Third, they indicate that the Punjab foothills and even the adjacent plains seemed to have come in and out of Kashmiri control during this period (c. 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries), apparently being ruled at times by Kashmiri kings and at times by kings who might be styled as post-Kidarites.

These discoveries alone would have made Deyell’s book worth reading. But it is a fourth implication that is the most important one. Deyell naturally wonders who may have issued the Pratāpa coins. It would have to be a king or kings who held sway over a vast area of the Gangetic plain for some time during the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Deyell identifies two plausible candidates: the branch of the Alchon Huns led by the kings Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, and the Puṣpabhūti (or Puṣyabhūti) kings Prabhākaravardhana and Harṣavardhana. Deyell argues that the Huns are unlikely candidates because there is no clear evidence that they ever penetrated as far east as Bihar where Pratāpa coins have been found. Besides, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula are really too early (late 5<sup>th</sup> to early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries) and we know that at least Toramāṇa (and probably Mihirakula as well) issued gold coins inspired by or imitating Gupta coins.<sup>2</sup>

That leaves the Puṣpabhūti kings Prabhākaravardhana and Harṣavardhana as the only viable candidates for the Pratāpa coinage. We know that Prabhākaravardhana used the epithet Pratāpaśīla and issued silver coins with this epithet. Nine of these silver coins, along with hundreds of the same series issued by Harṣavardhana using the epithet Śīlāditya, were found along with some Pratāpa coins in a hoard found at Bhitaura in Faizabad district, UP. Might not have Prabhākaravardhana Pratāpaśīla issued coins naming himself Pratāpa? This seems plausible. Deyell then shows that the distribution of find spots of Pratāpa coins corresponds just about perfectly with the known extent of Harṣavardhana’s empire (see his map 18.3). Attributing the Pratāpa coins to the Puṣpabhūti kings, therefore, seems like “the best scenario to explain the known facts. It also solves a tenacious and vexing problem: why did Harsha mint no coinage for his empire, beyond the local Maukhari silver? The answer is he did, but he chose to continue his father’s prototype for some or all of his reign.” (p. 192). Harṣavardhana’s missing coinage is thereby found!

Not content with presenting his highly persuasive argument, Deyell carefully studies all aspects of the coinage: style, iconography, paleography, metrology, minting techniques, and provenance, as well as the overall political and monetary situation of the time, to see if absolutely all of the evidence is consistent with his theory. It is. One natural question to ask that Deyell however did not address is: why did Prabhākaravardhana and Harṣavardhana not issue coins on the Gupta model in the areas where the Guptas had ruled? Would Kidarite style coinage familiar in their homeland of Thāneśwar, have been acceptable as currency in the areas further east in the Gangetic valley? This question may have been beyond the scope of Deyell’s work, but the answer to it may perhaps shed some light on the short-lived nature of Harṣha’s empire.

<sup>2</sup>Pankaj Tandon, “The Identity of Prakāśāditya,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 25, No. 4, October 2015, pp. 647–668 and “Attribution of the Nameless Coins of the Archer Type,” *The Numismatic Chronicle* (forthcoming, 2018).

In 1990, Deyell published his book *Living Without Silver*,<sup>3</sup> which has become the definitive work on the monetary history of early medieval north India. In this new book, he has stretched back in time by a couple of centuries and has produced what is destined to become the definitive work on the coinage of that period. <[ptandon@bu.edu](mailto:ptandon@bu.edu)>

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MUSLIMS AGAINST THE MUSLIM LEAGUE: CRITIQUES OF THE IDEA OF PAKISTAN. Edited by ALI USMAN QASMI and MEGAN EATON ROBB. pp. vii, 408. Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2017.  
doi:[10.1017/S1356186318000329](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186318000329)

One of the great developments of the last ten years of British rule in India was the transformation of the position of the All-India Muslim League. In the 1937 elections it won just five per cent of the Muslim vote; it could not be regarded as a serious political player. Yet, in the elections of 1945–46 it won about 75 per cent of the Muslim vote, winning 453 out of 524 seats in the central and provincial legislatures, a result which meant that the British and the Indian National Congress had to take seriously the League's demand for the creation of Pakistan at independence, a demand which it had formally voiced in March 1940.

With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, which was also the formation of the most populous Muslim nation in the world at the time, the narrative of how some Muslims, mainly from the old Mughal service class of northern India, began a movement for the reassertion and protection of their interests in the nineteenth century which ended up as the foundation of a separate Muslim state in the twentieth century, was the dominant Muslim story of British India. However, there were other Muslim interests, other Muslim political visions, and other Muslim identities. It is the purpose of this volume, which began at a conference which Megan Robb and Ai Usman Qasmi held at Oxford in 2014, to identify these alternative voices and to allow them to speak. Some, though not all, were to speak powerfully in the subsequent history of Pakistan.

The editors frame the collection of essays with a useful introduction which sets up the issue of the progress of the Muslim League juggernaut and the presence of differing and dissenting voices. An element of nuance is added with a discussion of the ways in which ideas such as 'nation', 'state' and 'homeland' were translated into vernacular languages and used in the debates of the time. Pertinent is the way in which *qaum* was used to describe the Muslim community, either within South Asia or in the world in the nineteenth century but increasingly in the twentieth century comes to mean nation. "... with the resolution of March 1940 [at Lahore] Muslims were no longer simply a minority seeking political rights and safeguards in India but a nation with sovereign claims seeking independence".

The fourteen contributions fall into several categories. Two place forms of composite, and geographically-based, nationalism against the claims of the League. So, Barbara Metcalf analyses the nationalist positions of Husain Ahmad Madani, the leader of Deoband, and the Jamiyat ul-Ulama-I Hind. She demonstrates in particular his emphasis on the fact that Muslims are buried in the soil of

<sup>3</sup>John S. Deyell, *Living Without Silver*, (New Delhi, 1990).