Trans-regional Connections: The 'Lion and Sun' motif and Coinage between Anatolia and India

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Prologue

The interlinkages between visual elements of material culture and interactions between people of different cultural groups has been a subject of keen interest and debate between historians of Art, Politics, Social Studies, anthropologists, and archaeologists. Designs and motifs travel with people, and are disseminated across a wide – sometimes very wide – geographic expanse. They develop multiple vocabularies and get assimilated in disparate cultures providing new meaning, interpretations and correspondences. Objects like coins have a propensity to circulate, much like people do, due to their very nature being a medium of exchange and payments. In this paper, I will focus on a famous motif – the 'Lion and Sun' – on money, to generate some discussion about how these interactions are mapped and what could have been the possible causal factors behind their transportation and adoption across a large tract of land, that between Anatolia to the West and India to the East. I intend to 'go backwards' in time tracking the trajectory of the appearance of the motif, mainly on coins, with an emphasis on the numismatic history of the device in the Indo-Islamic World. I will posit hitherto unpublished numismatic evidence to argue for some of my views and lastly, bring in more numismatic imagery and devices, particularly from India and Anatolia, within the ambit of the discussion generated from the study of the 'Lion and Sun' motif.

But it will be worthwhile to begin with a debate from the current discourse and contextualize the analysis within its remits. In his path-breaking monograph 'Objects of Translation' (2009), Islamic art historian F. Barry Flood outlined a methodology wherein he adopted 'linguistic models' to treat material culture that usually centres on 'things'. Adapting heavily from postcolonial theory and Anthropology, Flood illustrated how objects are designed or 'composed', consumed and commissioned in a world where 'polyglot frontiers' facilitate a 'multidirectional nature of exchange'. This particular cultural process, labelled as 'transculturation', weighs heavily in Flood's analysis where he brings forth one of the most fascinating aspects of 'things' that populate such multi-lingual or multi-cultural spaces – that they speak different 'visual languages' (Flood 2009: 8-9, 15-16). Flood's analysis centres on many aspects of material culture, such as 'coins, frescos, modes of dress, texts, manuscripts, monumental architecture and the more abstract but no less revealing realm of onomastics, royal titulature, and ritual

practice' (Flood 2009: 9-11). Providing hundreds of examples from such a wide range of 'things', Flood outlined how social processes like transculturation can be viewed through their study.

Although coins have featured in Flood's analysis, he has primarily focussed on coins of the Habbarid Amirs of Multan (Flood 2009: 39), the Ghaznavids (Flood 2009: 41) and the Ghurids (Flood 2009: 114-117). Along with the more typical numismatic phenomena, such as 'type continuity', Flood also discusses some other less common and perhaps even unique features like Sanskrit inscriptions on the coins of the Ghaznavid ruler Mahmud (AD 997-1030), which include not only the pro-forma legends like the one outlining the date and the place of issue, but remarkably, also a Sanskrit translation of the Shahada. From a typological viewpoint, he has drawn attention how some unusual type features, such as a stylized representation of Lakshmi the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity, were continued on the coins of the Ghurid ruler Muhammad bin Sam. Such occurrences are interesting to Flood because they highlight the 'fault line between the rigidity of rhetoric and the fluidity of practice' (Flood 2009: 116), which he views as a result of the fact that object like these populate a particular juncture where a 'polyglot vocabulary' embedded in them made their consumption and circulation easier . Flood therefore sees this continuity as an outcome of the 'cultural value' carried by coins, which is related but also distinct from, their purchasing power and the role they play as objects of economy. This, according to Flood, is not unique to the Ghaznavid / Ghurid periods in the subcontinent, but had already been witnessed in the very early decades of Islam, when the Umayyad Caliphs and/ or their provincial governors, essentially carried on with coins designed in the same way as the predecessor Byzantine and Sasanian dynasties, whose territories they had inherited (Flood 2009: 118). Along with continuities, Flood also highlights omissions which make coins, particularly the Ghurid ones, classic examples of how 'transculturation' works. He emphasizes, for example, how the inscriptions on the early Ghurid coins struck in India not only omit the elaborate Islamic titulature one encounters on Ghurid issues in their Afghan homeland, but also omit any reference to the Abbasid Caliph, who was a 'figure difficult to accommodate in the normative framework of Indic kingship' (Flood 2009: 116).

Flood's observations pertain more to the 'notions of centre and periphery' and 'diffusionism' which presupposes that "culture diffuses from 'high' centres to the more culturally impoverished peripheries". He attributes the interactions and interplay between visual aspects of Ghurid monuments and coins, to 'dynamic conditions in which signs and meanings were appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew' (Flood 2009: 262). What results is a 'cosmopolitan ecumene' and Flood's entire emphasis has been to underline that complex cultural processes facilitate this re-reading, that visual interconnections can be markers to study such cultural processes, and that 'Manichaean taxonomies' with their stark and Essentialist divisions of labels, obliterate the importance of these cultural processes in our understanding of the past.

But the view of numismatists has been somewhat contrarian. Instead of seeing the primacy of a grand scheme of cultural processes in such 'hybrid' and/ or syncretic and therefore unusual visual adaptions, numismatists have drawn attention to aspects that are more quotidian, which result in the same effect. As Islam spread out of Arabia into the immediately neighbouring regions of the Levant, Mesopotamia and further to Iran, vast areas which were monetized extensively and had complex currency systems in operation for centuries came under Arab / Islamic control. Early Islamic coins in these regions, till the Caliph Abd al-Malik b. Marwan famously reformed the currency in the 77th year of the Hegira, borrowed heavily from design vocabularies of the predecessor coinages. Stefan Heidemann has provided a 'bird's eye view' of early Islamic coinage, and has identified the Byzantine and Sasanian coinages as apparatuses which early Islam used extensively to issue its first coins (Heidemann 1998; Heidemann 2010). Much like the Ghurid or Ghaznavid 'polyglottism' that Flood identifies, these early Islamic coins also continue, change or modify or innovate with respect to designs already familiar and in circulation. Omitting ostensibly Christian features, such as the Globus Cruciger in hands of the Byzantine emperor(s) on the solidi, or substituting Kufic/ Arabic inscriptions for mint signatures on the bronze Folles were the most common modifications. Similarly, incorporating the name of Allah into marginal legends on the silver dirhams, the most extensive form of currency used in Sasanian Iran, was the major monetary modification in newly Arab provinces of Fars and Seistan.

Numismatists have reservations about viewing a 'grand anthropological scheme' of hybridity or polyglottism in such deviances and also, how much can such features be taken as a justification for other aspects of material culture in a 'compare-and-tell' sense. Treadwell has discussed a particularly interesting type – the 'Mihrab and 'Anaza' type – of early Islamic or Arab-Sasanian silver drachms in this respect (Treadwell 2005). Coins of this type were produced for a short while just before the reforms. On obverse, they depict a hybrid image of the Caliph in garbs of the Sasanian emperor and on the reverse, a *Mihrab* or prayer niche in which a spear is shown. George Miles, the first numismatist to discuss this type on the basis of a (then) unique coin in the collection of the American Numismatic Society, saw the occurrence of the reverse device as a deliberate 'alternative to replace the distasteful Zoroastrian symbolism of the fire-altar' which the predecessor Sasanian coinage had carried for over five centuries. The spear inside the niche was identified by Miles as the Prophet's short spear, or *'anaza* with which he indicated the direction of the prayer and also created an inviolable space around him while the prayer was conducted. Miles also contended that the niche that was depicted on the coin was the earliest dated representation of a *mihrab mujawwaf* or a 'sunken *mihrab*', which became a prominent feature of Islamic prayer architecture; in Miles' view, the 2-D coin depiction showing a spear inside a niche, was in fact a rendering of a 3-D architectural feature.

Treadwell describes in good detail how Miles' contentions were endorsed by certain scholars, who not only submitted to Miles' claims but extended them further into other inferences. One scholar quoted by Treadwell suggested that this depiction indicated that its predecessor, the Zoroastrian fire-altar, had

managed to survive on early Islamic coins because the early Muslims actually had made the fire-altar a part of their religious practice, and used it as an 'orientation point' to indicate the direction of the prayer (Treadwell 2005: 16-17). The replacement of the altar with a symbolism that incorporated 'purer' Islamic elements of the prayer ritual with respect to the same elements in it (the niche as a point of orientation, and the spear by which the Prophet indicated the direction), was therefore a logical modification of the design to Islamicize it. However, Treadwell also brings to notice that there were others who disagreed with Miles' identification of the device as a *mihrab* in the first place. One early rejoinder to Miles' contention placed the design not in the context of comparative/interpretative analogies, but within the coin design traditions of the region in which it had originated. Here therefore, we find the device identified not as a *mihrab* but as the sacrum covering the Constantinian Cross, a potent Christian symbol, at Jerusalem. The spear on the coin replaced the cross, and this, as endorsed by the inscription *Nasr Allah* which occurs next to the spear, suggested the 'triumph of Muslim armies in the Holy Land and the spiritual and physical replacement of Christianity by the new religion of Islam' (Treadwell 2005: 17-18).

Discussing at length various interpretations of the 'spear in niche' motif, Treadwell surmises that the design was an attempt at integrating 'Persian and Syrian numismatic imagery in order to create a form' for the re-introduction of silver coinage in an area where it had been largely absent. The fact that it immediately precedes the reforms of Abd al-Malik, which heralded aniconic and entirely epigraphic coinage across the Islamic lands, is seen by Treadwell as a signalling a terminus of a predecessor coinage tradition, rather than a 'new beginning'. He therefore contends that given the complexity of the designs of the 'spear in niche' type, "it is possible that seventh century Syrians were as confused by it as its modern observers have been"! But this coin type, as well as some other such 'hybrid' types, does allow us "to observe the decision making process that accompanied the pursuit of a suitable numismatic iconography" because "the historical value of coinage lies in the provision of a datable sequence of choices, compromises and innovations in a single medium" (Treadwell 2005: 21).

By highlighting the possibility of contemporary as well as an interpretative 'confusion' in the reception of the imagery of innovative and/ or hybridized coin designs, Treadwell emphasises the dilemma of what encodes the 'visuality' of these designs. Does the multiplicity of messages or 'polyglottism' contained within such images decides the primacy of their choice, or is it that the relatively more mundane and practical matters, like functioning as an acceptable exchange medium in a newly conquered land, drive what 'humble, mass-produced artefacts' like coins should bear on them? After all, Treadwell suggests that "the primary function of the numismatic image has been to guarantee to the coin user that the metal flan on which it is stamped holds a consistent value" (Treadwell 2005: 3).

The debate about what functions numismatic imagery assumes when coins are struck with conspicuous devices is thus posited within these two viewpoints – the anthropological view of Flood, and the

numismatic view of Treadwell. In the following pages, we will see how the employment of the 'Lion and Sun' image on coins struck between Anatolia and India, and their remarkable interconnections, helps us to revisit these viewpoints. To add more contexts to the discussion, I will also draw attention to parallels involving other numismatic devices.

The 'Lion and Sun' motif on Money

By far the most common modern occurrence of this motif was on Iranian money of the pre-Islamic Revolution period, on which it represented the national emblem of Iran. Coins (and later banknotes) of the Pahlavi and the Qajar dynasties depict a standing lion, holding a sword in his 'hand' or front paw, with the sun raising above its back (**FIG 1**). In the 19th and 20th centuries, particular religious and political messages were encoded in this emblem by firstly by the Qajars and then by their successors the Pahlavis. Afsaneh Najmabadi (2005) has discussed the design history of the motif in good detail. According to her, the Qajars projected the lion in emblematic sense as a visual metaphor for the Shi'i Imam 'Ali because he was regarded as the 'lion of the God' (Najmabadi 2005: 82-83). 'Ali's victorious weapon of choice the sword Zulfiqar was placed in the lion's hand. But this was an early 19th century modification, first made in the reign of Fath 'Ali Qajar Shah and later perpetuated in the state emblem of Iran. At the beginning of the Qajar period, we do not see the sword in the lion's hand. Instead, the lion is depicted in rampant or seated posture; however his association with 'Ali the imam, had very much been in the visual discourse ever since the end of the 18th century, as we see from this unique heavy gold coin in the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford's collection (**FIG 2**). Here the words *Ya 'Ali'* are prominently emblazoned below the belly of the lion.

The motif remained largely absent from the Iranian coins of the Safavid period, mainly because of the fact that the Safavid coinage in the higher value regime was mainly inscriptional. However, the broad range of lower value coins, struck during the Safavid period, was produced in various cities and twons of the realm with pictorial depictions. These coins omit the name of the ruler, but often include AH dates and/or a regnal year. The 'Lion and Sun' motif appears infrequently on such coins. Particularly worthy of mention are the 'specially struck', wide flan coins of Isfahan mint, produced during the reign of Husayn I (**FIG 3**). Afsaneh Najmabadi (2005: 68-69) and Shapur Shahbazi have both outlined different explanations for what the symbol stood for in Safavid Iran. Shahbazi (A. Shapur Shahbazi, "FLAGS i. Of Persia," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, X/1, pp. 12-27, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/flags-i (accessed on 1 Oct 2018)) suggests that the Safavid take on the symbol was a particularly 'Iranian' interpretation involving earlier cultural and historical trajectories. The symbol had been associated with astronomical observations since very ancient times. The summer sun in the Northern Hemisphere is at its strongest between July 20 and August 20 when it is in zodiacal sign of Leo, which is his 'house' or 'domicile'. The planetary lord of this domicile is Jupiter. The Sun, the lion and Jupiter have all been linked with power and kingship in multifarious ways

(for a detailed survey of the 'lion god' in antiquity, see Krappe 1945). The Safavids espoused a solar calendar and developed an Iranian sense of cosmology through it. Needless to say, the sun signs of the zodiac were very important for them and acted as mediators for meanings attached to specific ideas like kingship. Shahbazi (*ibid.*) states that the Sun was appropriated by the Safavids in retaliation of their Western rivals, the Ottomans, who had espoused the 'crescent moon' as their insignia. This dichotomy had parallels in the *Shahnameh* which talked about "'the Sun of Iran' and 'the Moon of the Turanians'" when it referred to the old Western adversaries of Iranians, the Romans, and later the Byzantine emperors. Besides, the association of the sun with the lion, which was the title of the prophet and Imam 'Ali, meant the symbol also stood for 'glory and religion'. Both the Prophet and Imam 'Ali were credited to have "possession of a divine light of lights (*nūr al-anwār*) of leadership, which was represented as a blazing halo". In this way, the ancient Iranian concepts like *Farr* and *Khvarr* that were associated with the 'kingly glory' also came to be encapsulated in this symbol.

The 'Lion and Sun' in India

The most famous numismatic depictions of the 'Lion and Sun' motif in India are seen on 'coin-like' objects struck by the Mughal emperor Jahangir. The reason to use the cautious term 'coin-like' is because although the objects are struck to a monetary standard, we know from contemporary accounts that their *raison d'etre* was not primarily to circulate as a medium of exchange but to be used in carefully orchestrated courtly rituals that concerned status, imperial favour and grace and ideals associated with Mughal kingship. However, for reasons of simplicity I will refer to them as 'coins' hereunder.

These coins are famous because unlike any other group of Mughal coins, they depict a portrait of the emperor on the obverse. Although they were known to numismatists like Marsden in the 19th century, the first historian / numismatist to describe and discuss them in detail was S H Hodivala. In a paper published in his tome *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics*, he contextualized these coins with contemporary, or near-contemporary, mentions from records and travelogues (Hodivala 1923: 147-170). A couple of examples are illustrated here (**FIG 4, FIG 5**). On the reverse, they depict the 'Lion and Sun' motif. The execution of the lion is realistic but it is worth a note that here the animal does not sport its characteristic mane. Instead, it resembles more a tiger. This is most likely because the word 'Sher' in Farsi means both, lion as well as tiger. Indeed, in the passages quoted by Hodivala (1923: 147, 148), the Mughal historian Khafi Khan refers to the animal as "'Sher' surmounted or ridden by the Sun". These coins were struck in the 6th year of Jahangir's reign. On another well-known piece struck in the 8th regnal year, when Jahangir had moved his entourage to the Rajput city of Ajmer (**FIG 6**), the device appears on the reverse encircled within the hemistich of a Farsi couplet which extolls the virtues of the coin and its perpetrator the emperor. Here the animal is shown in a couchant posture, resting with its front paws crossing over each other.

Even before Hodivala, numismatists like Stanley Lane Poole had provided explanations for the occurrence of this unusual image on these coins (Hodivala 1923: 162). Lane Poole contended that Jahangir's father the emperor Akbar had a particular penchant for solar worship, which "undoubtedly found encouragement under Akbar and was never repudiated by Jahangir". There was an astrological connection too – according to Jahangir's Indian (Hindu) horoscope, the Sun was placed in the house of Leo. This was a "happy sign", because "….the Sun is the Emperor of the planets and has the Kings of the Earth under his own protection. Leo is the Sun's own house; he rules the sign and it is called his 'Throne' or his 'Joy' and… is the house where he is most strong and powerful". But apart from such contexts, Hodivala outlines historical reasons why this particular sign was adopted by the Mughals as their 'royal emblem'. Quoting from the 'Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo to the Court of Timur 1403-1406', Hodivala (1923: 163-164) draws our attention to the fact that the emblem already adorned a lofty gateway at Kesh, Timur's birthplace. Clavijo noted that since Timur's own insignia had been the 'three annulets' emblem, the 'Lion and Sun' motif must have been the sign of the "former Lords of Samarcand". Hodivala therefore concludes that "the 'Lion and Sun' had been adopted as his 'Coat of Arms' by Timur" and therefore it had every reason to appear on "the imperial ensigns of his Indian descendants, too".

It will be appropriate to point out an error in Hodivala's estimation here, although it does not majorly affect the conclusions he draws. A close reading of passage quoted from Clavijo suggests that Hodivala's inference suggesting the emblem was adopted by Timur as his own 'coat of arms' is obviously wrong. Clavijo's narrative clearly suggests that this was in fact not Timur's own emblem, and therefore he concluded that the gateway to the palaces on which it appeared, must have been constricted not by Timur, but by "the former Lords of Samarcand". These 'former lords' were the Chaghatayids, and the Mughals regarded themselves as 'Chaghatayids' in terms of their political lineage, although biologically they were descendants of Timur. It is therefore likely that they adopted the 'Lion and Sun' as their emblem because it was connected with the Chaghatayids, and not because Timur adopted it as his 'coat of arms'.

Be that as it may, it is certain that apart from its appearance on these coins, the emblem was a definite feature of Mughal kingship rituals. There is evidence to suggest it appeared on Mughal flags, much as it was adopted on Safavid pennants. Hodivala has quoted from the account of Peter Mundy, the East India Company's factor who witnessed the cavalcade of Shahjahan en route to Agra on 1 June 1632 (Hodivala 1923: 164-165) –

"…Then thousands of horsemen going breadthwise; then came about 19 or 20 great elephants of State with coverings and furniture; ….some of them carryieinge a flagg with the Kinges Armes, which is a Tygar couching with the Sunne riseinge over his backe…"

The numismatic depiction shows up in interesting parallels in other forms of visual representations particularly when it comes to pennants. Noteworthy are paintings from the famous 'Windsor Padshahnama' manuscript in the Royal Collection. These were not known to Hodivala and are therefore worthy of note in the context of the discussion of this emblem. The emblem in its various forms is seen in many paintings of the 'Padshahnama' album, however three examples would suffice here. The first painting shows Jahangir receiving Prince Khurram back from a victorious campaign in Mewar, and is attributed to the artist Balchand (accession number RCIN 1005025.f, **FIG 7**) Towards the base of the composition we see a footman carrying a banner over his shoulder, on which the 'Lion and Sun' motif is clearly visible (detail, **FIG 8**). Here the lion is shown standing on all fours. A point worth noting is the backdrop of the device where one sees clouds that are unmistakably executed in the 'Chinese' fashion. Similar cloud formations are well-known from Chinese, Central Asian and Turkic art. Typically for a Mughal rendering, this banner appears to bring together several artistic tropes – a Central Asian (Chaghatayid) motif which shows parallels in Iran, is decorated with Turkic / Chinese features, and is shown on a pennant carried by an Indian footman in a scene that is set in North India.

The second painting is by the artist Payag, the younger brother of Balchand, and it depicts the Mughal siege of Qandahar which was engaged in May 1631 (accession number RCIN 1005025.s, **FIG 9**). This is not the famous city of Qandahar in Afghanistan, but a homonymous strategic stronghold in the Deccan, located in present-day Maharashtra State. The painting shows the Mughal army led by the courtier 'Azam Khan, approaching the ramparts of the fort, witnessing an explosion. As the vanguard of the army, the soldiers carry two bright red, brocaded pennants, on which the 'Lion and Sun' sign is displayed against the backdrop of 'Chinese' clouds and stars. The lion here is walking to left, with a leg raised in a stride (detail, **FIG 10**).

The third painting depicts an event very similar to the one described by Peter Mundy (accession number RCIN 1005025.ai, **FIG 11**). It is attributed to the anonymous 'Kashmiri Painter' and in all likelihood shows a part of the imperial procession in which the Mughal court moved to Lahore from Agra in March 1634 Here we see a procession approaching walled city. Unlike Mundy's description, there are no elephants here but there is a caparisoned horse without a rider. Alongside the horse are two footmen carrying banners made of green fabric, with the 'Lion and Sun' embroidered onto them, most likely in gold thread. Here too, the backdrop of the motif is richly decorated with cloud formations in the same 'Chinese' style (detail, **FIG 12**). The lion is depicted couchant, much like it is on Jahangir's coin struck at Ajmer.

The deployment of the 'Lion and Sun' motif in this way had very clearly led to its visual association with the Mughal Empire and kingship. This can be seen in the way the Mughal Empire had its early reception in the West. By far the most well-known example of its use in this fashion is William Baffin's early map of India (British Library, acc. no. Maps K.Top.115.22, 'William Baffin's map of the Mughal

Empire', London: Thomas Sterne, 1619, **FIG 13**) where it appears as a vignette right above the 'genealogical seal' of Emperor Jahangir, which appears to have generated a lot of curious inquiry leading to its detailed description in other, near- contemporary narratives such as 'Purchas his Pilgrimes'. Baffin, more well-known as an explorer for the 'North-west Passage' connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific and thus giving his name to a bay in Canada, joined the service of the East India Company in 1616-1617. He took the post of Master's Mate and navigator on the East Indiaman 'Ann Royal' and left the English shore for India in February 1617, arriving at Surat in September. On his return journey to Britain in 1619, Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador to the court of Jahangir, boarded the 'Ann Royal' as a passenger with his entourage. Roe had collected data for 37 cities and towns in the Mughal Empire, and Baffin collated it into a map. The map was engraved by Reynold Elstrack and published in 1619 (Foster 1899: 542-546).

On this map towards the top right corner, we see the vignette of the 'seated lion and sun' which shows a great resemblance to the one shown on gold coins of Jahangir that were struck at Ajmer. This might be more than a coincidence, because we know from Sir Thomas Roe's account that he was presented with a coin bearing the Emperor's portrait by him while he was received by the Emperor at Ajmer. Roe recalls in detail his meeting with Jahangir in which the latter gave him the coin as an "especiall favour" and indicated that Roe was exempted from regular rituals showing subservience, such as touching his head to the ground in the Emperor's presence. He also indicates that this gift was a very important one, and worth much more ("five times as good as any hee gives in that kind") than its actual metal value. Conceivably, he must have had the gift with him when he returned to England, and might even have shown it to Baffin. On the map, the Latin inscription *Insignia Potentissimi Monarchi Magni Mogoli* or the 'all-powerful emblem of the Great Mughals' circles the motif. This serves as a clear indicator of what the motif meant to its audience.

The 'Lion and Sun' beyond India in Numismatics:

A reference to how the 'Lion and Sun' emblem was regarded as the emblem of the predecessors of the Timurids at Samarqand has already been made and we have also seen how the motif had been appropriated by the contemporaries of the Mughals in Iran, the Safavids. In fact, its occurrence on the Mughal coins can also be seen in the context of the 'Persianisation' of the Mughal court, which was particularly espoused by Jahangir and his Iranian wife, Noorjahan. Although the motif had always been regarded as an Iranian there were obvious instances of its appropriation outside Iran, too. In general, these were the regions on the fringes of the Persian landmass. By far the most famous instance of the occurrence of the emblem in Central Asia, at a time contemporaneous Jahangir in India, is at the Sher Dor Madrasah at Samarqand, built by Yalangtush Bahadur in early 17th century. Here it adorns the *pishtaq* of the great monument, and much like the 'Lion and Sun' emblem on modern Iranian money,

has been adopted on the banknotes of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in a direct attempt to appropriate its Timurid past to serve the cultural and historical identity of a modern nation.

In the centuries preceding the 16th, the motif appeared on coins of many Islamic dynasties of the greater Iranian and connected regions. By far the most concentrated instances are of 14th and 15th centuries. It is a well-known fact that many of these dynasties were of Mongol and Turkic ethnic stock, which exhibited an increasing tendency to turn 'Persianate' when they appear in regions where Iranian cultural influence predominates. In the 15th century, we see the motif appearing on Aq Qoyunlu coins, such as those struck by Nur al-Din Hamza bin Qara Yülük Usman (1438-1444, **FIG 14**). It is also seen on anonymous copper coins, struck at Mardin, located in South-eastern Anatolia, most likely towards the end of the Aq Qoyunlu period (**FIG 15**). In the 14th century we see it appearing on copper coins of Jani Beg the Khan of the 'Golden Horde' or Jochid branch of the Mongols, struck at Khwarizm (**FIG 16**). Under the Ilkhanid Mongols, it appears on coins of Abu Sa'id (1316-1335), also struck at Mardin (**FIG 17**), and on coins of Arghun (1258-1291), struck at Tus in the Khorasan region (**FIG 18**). It is worth noting that Mardin and Tus are located almost at the northern cardinal points so far as the Iranian cultural sphere extends at this time.

On most of these coins, the motif shows its usual variations, much like it does on the Mughal and Safavid coins. The lion faces right or left, and in all instances it is shown standing or walking. But on no coins it is shown seated. Also interesting is the fact that on coins of Arghun we see an interesting variation – the inscription *Rasul Allah* appears inscribed on the Sun that rises over the lion's back. All the other instances of the emblem are decidedly secular. This is perhaps the earliest direct Islamic connection with the motif seen anywhere, and it is fascinating more because the ruler who struck these coins was ostensibly a Buddhist, had a Christian mother and had married his sister to the Christian ruler of Georgia. On the coin of Abu Sa'id, a later Ilkhanid ruler, the motif shows a full solar disc.

The occurrence of the motif on coins in the region of Anatolia is most interesting. In Southern Turkey, Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, the dominant political dynasts in the 13th – 15th centuries were Turkomans. They issued a large and varied bronze coinage which was predominantly figural, unlike almost all other contemporary Islamic coinages. A detailed survey of Turcoman figural coinages has been published by Spengler and Sayles (Spengler & Sayles 1992). They illustrate many parallels to the coin depiction from various examples of contemporary material culture, such as earlier coinages, bronze vessels, tile motifs, manuscript illustrations and architectural features. Among the numismatic inspirations, we find motifs that go back to around a thousand years, such as copies of the portrait designs of Seleucid coins. Precisely why motifs from such antique coinages were adopted is still a quandary, and Spengler and Sayles contribute very little towards actually ascertaining the reason behind this curious adoption. The 'Lion and Sun' motif also features on some of them, particularly on the coins of the Artuqid ruler of Mardin, Shams al-Din al-Salih (1312-1364). He interestingly deploys it with a

denomination context – one double dirham coins we see two lions walking away from each other in a juxtaposed manner with the full solar disc between them (**FIG 19**), while on single dirhams, we see the motif in its more familiar form, with the semi-circular sun rising above the back of the lion (**FIG 20**).

The Earliest Numismatic Depictions in Anatolia:

The depictions we see on the coins of the Artuqids in Anatolia bring us to the earliest numismatic depiction of this motif, which is found on the coins of Seljuq rulers of Rum. As a numismatic type, they are very well-known and a complete catalogue is found in Broome and Novak's seminal publication on the coinage of the Seljuqs of Rum (Broome & Novak 2011). The motif is seen on coins of one of the last Rum Seljuq rulers, Kay Qubad III (1298-1302) but it is his predecessor, Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusrau II (1237-1246) who is credited with its introduction on Rum Seljuq coins (Broome & Novak 2011: 160-169).

By far the most obvious feature of the motif as it appears on these coins is the solar disc which is shown as full circle above the lion's back. The lion in most cases walks to right, with one paw raised (Broome and Novak list one coin, no. 277c, where the animal walks to the left, but they contend that it is a contemporary forgery). The Abbasid Caliph is cited in an inscription above the lion. While a huge number of coins of the type are known in silver, there are very rare issues in gold, too (**FIG 21**). On one gold type, there are two lions walking in opposite directions (**FIG 22**) and it is obvious that this must have bene the design inspiration to the copper coins of Artuqid ruler Salih, described above.

Broome and Novak have provided us with a very detailed numismatic typology for the type, but without going into the finer details of the classification, it would suffice here to note a few key features. As Broome and Novak have noted, the bulk of this coinage was produced at the mints of Konya and Sivas. The design changed abruptly in AH638 when the pictorial device was introduced; prior to that, for nearly four years, Kai Khusrau II had struck coins with non-pictorial designs very similar to those struck under his predecessor, Kay Qubadh. The pictorial device was abandoned equally abruptly in about AH641, and a coinage with a more traditional Islamic format was introduced, with features like the *Bismillah*, and the *Shahada* appearing alongside the Caliph's name and some new titles were appended to the Sultan. In this relatively short time, the 'Lion and Sun' coinage appears to have had a massive issuance as noted from several minor and major varieties in the dies. Broome and Novak classified these into eight major variations and devised their numismatic typology around them (Broome & Novak 2011: 140-141).

The legend on reverse of the coins can be grouped into three categories depending on the style and the calligraphy of the legends. Coins struck at Konya show cursive and ornamental letters with characteristic 'split upper ends' (**FIG 23**) whereas coins of the Sivas mint have the letters engraved in more angular, archaic-looking form. The surrounding legends which give the date, often in the Turkic

cypher forms, encase the angular inscription forming a calligraphic rectangle (**FIG 24**). On some coins, the rectangle is actually a cartouche enclosing the central inscription, while the surrounding inscription is placed within margins between the rim of the coin and the rectangular cartouche. Some coins of Sivas mint show the cartouche encasing inscriptions engraved in a cursive style, as seen on the seen on the coins of Konya.

Kai Khusrau II's coins are by far the earliest chronological instance where the numismatic genealogy of the 'Lion and Sun' motif can be traced from. It is clear that from mid- 13th century onwards, the motif gradually spread out – first in other parts of Anatolia, and very quickly towards the wider fringes of the Persianate world, which at this time had been witnessing shifts in migration and settlement patterns caused by the invading Central Asian Turks and Mongols for nearly two centuries. It is a well-known fact that these nomadic newcomers regarded the Iranian cultural collective in high esteem and appropriated Persianate ideals of kingship and governance. The adoption of Iranian names like Kai Qubadh and Kai Khusrau is perhaps the most evident sign of these Turks turning 'Iranian' in a cultural sense. This propensity to adapt to Persianate culture has been remarked upon by many scholars who have worked on the history of the Seljuqs of Rum. The choice of the 'Lion and Sun' motif adds another facet to this narrative. However, what precisely prompted its adoption on coins for a relatively short time, and what caused its abandonment, are questions to which no satisfactory answer can be found. A connection with the Sultan's marriage with the Armenian princess named Ta'amar has been envisaged based on the testimony of Bar Hebreaus, a 13th century Syrian Orthodox monk and scholar. But Peacock (2006: 141) has cogently outlined how this is untenable. A detailed discussion on the nature and deployment of the motif is presented by Garry Leiser (1998) in which he dismisses this story, by pointing out to the fact that Kai Khusrau struck a rare coin-type with two lions in the year he was married, not one lion as seen on the more ubiquitous coinage that was issued a few years later. Covering various material and literary sources, and acknowledging its astrological significance, Leiser concludes that the motif was introduced by Kai Khusrau as a 'symbol of his reign', and that the 'sun with the human face represented the Sultan who was supreme over man and beast'. The supremacy of the Sultan of course rested in the articulation that he was the 'shadow of the Divine' as per Islamic tenets of theocracy. Perhaps, it is likely that the Sultan had to remind his subjects of this status, because in the very years the coinage was issued, Kai Khusrau's reign was marred by political upheavals (for a summary of these see Cahen 1968: 135-138). Be that as it may, the appearance of the motif on Seljuq Rum coins did end up creating a long history of the numismatic appearance, which extended well into our own times.

'Lion and Sun' in India – new evidence and fresh questions:

As we saw above, there is no antecedent to the appearance of the 'Lion and Sun' image in India before its adoption by the Mughals as their insignia. George Michell has suggested that the motif appears on

architecture of the Bahmani Sultans (Michell & Eaton 1992: 80-83), particularly on a gateway at the city of Firuzabad, founded by the Sultan Taj al-Din Firuz Shah (1397-1422) near his capital Gulbarga but here the two elements appear to be shown separately and not in a close context with each other as seen on coins. It might have been the earliest instance of adoption of such motifs in Indo-Islamic architecture, but the occurrence of the lions and the sun as individual decorative elements is quite a different subject than their occurrence together. The earliest, and by far the only, numismatic representations of the motif are the ones encountered on rare portrait coins of Jahangir. The genealogy of this occurrence stems out of the employment of the emblem by the Chaghatayids of Central Asia as their symbol.

These observations were dramatically altered by the find of a unique silver coin which appeared in an auction in 2013 (**FIG 25**, Stephen Album Rare Coins, Auction 17, lot 546, 19 September 2013). Prior to this, in December 2012, Steve Album, well-known numismatist and the then Director of the auctioneering firm, had sent its pictures to me. In our private communication, Steve said that he had found this coin in an old German collection of Islamic coins that he had purchased earlier in 2013. Steve uploaded the coin on the 'Zeno' on-line database for Oriental coins in December 2012. (www.zeno.ru, Zeno #120013). Barring the listing on 'Zeno', the coin remains unpublished in numismatic literature so it will be a good opportunity to describe it here.

Metal – silver; weight – 2.55 gm

Obverse: lion walking to right, with paw raised, sun-face above its back; Arabic inscription *Nasir al-Dunya wa al-Din* above

Reverse: in rectangle, inscription in three lines in Sharada script *Sri Ma ha ma / da Ha sa na / Ka ra lu ka*

As indicated by the *laqab* on obverse and the Indian legend on the reverse, it is clear that this coin was issued by Nasir al-Din Muhammad Qarlugh (1249-1266?). The Qarlughs were a minor Turkic dynasty that ruled in NW India. Nasir al-Din Muhammad's father was Saif al-Din Hasan Qarlugh, who rose to prominence as a member of the retinue of Jalal al-Din Mangubarni, the Khwarizm Shah, who invaded the Indian subcontinent in about 1221, taking advantage of the power struggle which erupted as the Ghurid Empire crumbled. He established himself in the aftermath of the invasion in the regions of Ghazna and Kurraman, and of Binban or Hazara and Koh-i Jud mountains, which were strategically placed on a trade route between Ghazna and Northern parts of present-day Paksitan. After Iltutmish, the Sultan of Delhi defeated the last rebellious Ghurid commander Nasir al-Din Qubacha in 1229, Hasan Qarlugh acknowledged his suzerainty. But after Iltutmish's death in 1236, he entered into an allegiance with the Mongols and embarked on a short lived expansionistic phase, penetrating into the regions of Southern Punjab (Multan) and Sindh, to the South of his stronghold. Hasan died in 1249, leaving his

son Nasir al-Din Muhammad in charge of his domains. The new Qarlugh sultan has to contend with his namesake Nasir al-Din Mahmud, a powerful Sultan of Delhi, and therefore adopted a pragmatic stance to have good relations with both the Mongols and the Sultans in Delhi, while maintaining a nominal subordinate relationship with the Mongol Khan. But during his career he allied himself with some rebels of the Delhi court which ultimately brought his downfall in about 1266, when his kingdom was annexed by Ghiyath al-Din Balban, who had succeeded Mahmud as the Sultan at Delhi, and had embarked upon a massive campaign against the Mongols to consolidate his hold on the Punjab and Sindh (Wink 2001: 200-201)

The Qarlughs struck coins in their own names and although they maintained a subordinate relationship to the Mongols, they never cited their overlords on their coins. Saif al-Din Hasan issued silver Tankas citing the Abbasid Caliphs, and a range of copper and billon types in the denomination known as 'Jital' (Goron & Goenka 2001: 489-490). While Arabic featured on the coins of higher denomination, the lower value coins used Indian scripts, mainly Nagari, for their legends. A large number of Hasan's successor Nasir al-Din Muhammad's coins have been recovered from the Salt Ranges and they are mainly 'Jitals' (Wink 2001: 201). Ghazna and Kurraman feature as mint-names on certain types (**FIG 26, FIG 27**). In most instances his coins are bi-scriptural, with legends in Arabic and Sharada appearing on either side. Until the discovery of the silver coin described above, no silver coins attributed to Nasir al-Din Muhammad Qarlugh were known.

The silver coin is remarkable for more than one reason. The first is the employment of local scripts, for a legend that ostensibly gives the Sultan's name in an Indian fashion. It is appended with the honorific 'Shri', and then the name follows the order of first name (Muhammad), father's name (Hasan) and the clan-name which could well be seen as a surname in the Indian sense (Karaluka = Qarlugh). The *laqab* of the Sultan *Nasir al-Dunya wa al-Din* does not really fit into this schema so it has been moved to the obverse.

But by far the most significant aspect of the coin is the fact that it copies the design of the coins of Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusrau II, the Rum Seljuq Sultan in exactitude so far as the design is concerned. The copying is not a 'blind' act, but intentional because while copying the overall appearance of the Rum Seljuq type, Nasir al-Din Muhammad Qarlugh has added some really interesting innovations and variations on the theme. The first noticeable variation is the execution of the solar disc, which is smaller and closer to the body of the lion and creates an effect of the sun rising from the back of the lion. Secondly, the citation to the Abbasid Caliph is dropped entirely, and is substituted by the Sultan's *laqab*. Thirdly on the reverse, the legend is in a non-Islamic script. The fact that it is encased in a rectangle clearly shows that Kay Khusrau II's coins of Sivas mint must have acted as a prototype for this issue.

This not only extends the genealogy of the 'Lion and Sun' motif in India by more than three centuries but demonstrates that it was adopted almost contemporaneously on coins of two dynasties that were

located far apart from each other. No doubt that Kay Khusrau II inaugurated its use on his coins, but Muhammad Qarlugh appears to have followed suit very quickly, perhaps in a matter of one and half decades. It is interesting to note that the regions where the kingdoms producing these coins were located are almost the cardinal ends of the Turkic World at this time. They could also be viewed as the Western and Eastern fringes of the Iranian cultural ambit. But while the Rum Seljuq rulers' aspirations to turn culturally 'Persian' are well-known, we have no such information for the Qarlughs. In fact, the usage of Sharada script on Muhammad Qarlugh's coins suggests his closeness to the Indian cultural sphere.

There is not much information available on direct trade between the two kingdoms, although we know that the Qarlugh kingdom had control over regions producing rock salt, which might have been used as a potential trading commodity across a wide area. However, the Anatolian kingdom is not really likely to have relied on supplies from far away Punjab for the salt it needed; it'd have plenty of natural resources to exploit for the commodity much closer to home. The uniqueness of Muhammad Qarlugh's coin stands out in comparison to the huge output of Kay Khusrau II's coins with the 'Lion and Sun' motif and ostensibly there are no records of Rum Seljuq coins turning up in the Punjab, neither are Qarlugh coins ever noted to have been found in Anatolia. So it is less likely that trade was the intermediary vector in causing this numismatic parallelism. Equally, there is no evidence on hand about any political connections between the two dynasties. Hasan Qarlugh's master Jalal al-Din Mangbarni is known to have invaded the North-eastern fringe of the Rum Seljuq kingdom but that was some years before the issue of the 'Lion and Sun' coins by Kay Khusrau II. Both Kay Khusrau II and Muhammad Qarlugh shared the political fate of being forced to swear allegiance to the Mongols. It is plausible that Kay Khusrau II's coins might have travelled eastwards as part of a tribute paid to the Mongol Great Khan, who in turn gave some of them as payment to his mercenary soldiers who brought them to north-western India and thus they were sighted by Muhammad Qarlugh. Be that as it may, we only have guesses to offer to explain how the two kingdoms could have interacted in a numismatic sense.

Rum Seljuq and Qarlugh connections: 'Trans-culturation'?

This is where the discursive debate outlined at the beginning of this paper needs a re-visit. If trade or political links, the most common forms of networks that could bring material culture together, don't really seem to provide an answer to what caused the coins of the Rum Seljuqs to be imitated in faraway NW India, what could the reason be? Is the occurrence of the same motif, one evidently copying the other earlier instance, within such a short span of time, indicative of 'polyglottism' or is there a more mundane and functional numismatic reason behind it - like adopting to an already existing coinage?

At the outset it is evident that the second option was almost certainly not the case why Muhammad Qarlugh copied Kay Khusrau II's coins. As noted earlier the issuance of this type is evidently a very short-lived one and in the Qarlugh territories, there was no antecedence of such a numismatic

denomination, nor any such numismatic design. So Muhammad Qarlugh did not issue the coin to fit in with a monetary reality that already existed in his domain and he had a vested interest in continuing.

From a viewpoint of transculturation and objects 'speaking different languages', the two near-contemporary instances of the 'Lion and Sun' motif appearing at the two ends of the Iranian cultural world each have their own nuances. For Kay Khusrau II, the most likely driving factor to introduce it on his coins was his connectedness with the Persianate cultural world which was in league with the gradual Persianization of the Seljuq Turks. However for the Qarlugh Turks, sandwiched between the Persian and the Indian cultural spheres, 'Indianization' was equally significant as 'Persianization'. The coinage with Muhammad Qarlugh issued bears testimony to this sensitivity. On the 'Lion and Sun' coin, he chose to inscribe his name not only in an Indian script, but also in an Indian fashion, in the 'first name- father's name- surname/ clan-name' format. He appears to have done away with the Islamic format, except that his *laqab* appears on obverse. From a transculturation perspective, these features fit well in the mechanisms of 'objects in translation' that Flood has put forward. What is lacking here, however, is the precise knowledge of what sort of monetary contact these two rather weak kingdoms would have had, to have facilitated the import of an image from faraway Anatolia in NW India.

Perhaps this can be explained from a deeper, more anthropological viewpoint. The Seljuqs and the Qarlughs were both Turks who originated in Central Asia and then migrated towards Iran, establishing themselves into settled kingdoms through their military and political acumen (For a description of Turkic presence in the Indian subcontinent, including some discussion on the 'identity' connotations of the term, see Wink 2001: 61-67). Would it be too far-fetched to assume that in mid-13th century they shared a knowledge about their Turkic identity and considered themselves primarily as 'Turks' even they now inhabited in very different and distant geographic and cultural worlds? Was the motif of 'Lion and Sun' adopted by Muhmmad Qarlugh as an indicator of cultural sophistication only because another Turk king was doing it in a distant land? In other words, did the ethnic identities of these rulers play a part in cross-pollinating of the motif? This might be a plausibility given we have not much evidence of any other activity between the Rum Seljuqs and the Qarlughs. I will now present further numismatic evidence to underline this aspect. Much like the silver coin of Muhammad Qarlugh, the arguments and observations made hereunder rest partly on a coin which is hitherto unpublished in numismatic literature.

The 'Horseman' motif on 12th century Turkic coins in India and beyond:

The introduction of a totally new numismatic type, including the denomination, is not a peculiarity demonstrated by Muhammad Qarlugh alone. Nearly five decades earlier, the same propensity was shown by the Islamic armies that invaded Bengal in late 12th- early 13th centuries. The conquest was carried out in the name of Muhammad bin Sam, of the Ghurid house of Ghazna but the composition of the Ghurid army was dominated by Turkic cavalry led by several Turkic generals. Qutb al-Din Aybek

the most prominent of 'Maliks' under the Ghurid overlords was a Turk, and so was Ikhtyar al-Din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji, the architect of the Ghurid conquest of Bengal, who came from the Khalaj subgroup of Ghuzz or Oghuz Turks. In 1205, Bakhtiyar Khilji sacked Nudiya the preeminent city of Western Bengal and established an Islamic government at Lakhnauti, the capital of the predecessor Sena dynasty (Wink 2001: 48-149). On this occasion, commemorative coins were struck in gold and silver in the name of Muhammad bin Sam.

These coins are of a type pretty much unknown before in the region. They depict a horseman facing to left, holding a mace in his hand, with the horse in gallop. They are dated Ramadan, AH601 (April-May 1205) and in addition to the Arabic legends, also carry the Devanagari label *Gauda Vijaye* or 'Conquest of Bengal', citing their *raison d'être* (Goron & Goenka 2001: 146, Type B1, **FIG 28**). Coins of both metals are struck to the denomination often referred to as 'Tanka', weighing at around 10.8 gm but the weight of the silver coins is heavier, at 12.6 gm. But soon afterwards, coins of 'horseman' type were struck in a different denomination, described as a 'fractional Tanka of 20 *Rati'*, 'Rati' being the name of the basic Indian standard to weigh gold (Goron & Goenka 2001: 146, Types B2 and B3). These coins weighed around 2.3 gm. They also have the horseman as their chief type feature, but unlike the commemorative issues, they only bear inscriptions in Indian script and language. The name of the Ghurid supreme Sultan is indicated in Devanagari script as *Shri Ma ha / mee ra Ma Ha / ma da Sa ma* in three lines. Around the horseman, the date and month of issue are inscribed as per the Hindu *Vikrama Samvat* (VS) calendar (**FIG 29**). The earliest of these coins are dated in the month of *Bhadrapada*, in the year VS1262, which corresponds to August 1205. From extant specimens one can observe some salient changes in the execution of the horseman – on some coins he carries a mace / sceptre as on the 'victory commemorative coins', but on some others he carries a sword. Both attributes are indexical to suggest royalty or authority. On coins issued in the month of *Ashwina*, which succeeds *Bhadrapada* in the Hindu calendar we see the horseman galloping to right carrying a long lance (**FIG 30**). But here, the Indian legend on the reverse has given way once again to the Arabic inscription. The type was continued for a few more years, and coins in the name of successive Sultans / governors, namely Shams al-Din Iltutmish, Rukn al-Din 'Ali Mardan and Ghiyath al-Din 'Iwad, are known (Goron & Goenka 2001: 146-149). The gold is restricted to the 'fractional Tanka denomination and is quite rare, but the silver Tankas are relatively more common, although by no means profuse. Gradually, the type, barring the figural motif of the horseman is fully Islamicized, with features like the *Shahada* making an appearance.

The internal chronology of the issuance of these coins is comprehensible – the earliest coins, which are commemorative, show Islamic characteristics such as a script which would have been quite alien in Bengal at this time. But these coins quickly give way to those having Indian inscriptions and employing a Hindu dating system, which then gradually ease back into coins with Arabic and fully Islamic inscriptions. The unusual aspect here is that there is no antecedence for the type, or for the

denominations, in Bengal. It is perfectly understandable that coins would be struck in the name of the Sultan in a newly conquered territory, owing to the tenets of *Khutba* and *Sikka* that define Islamic kingship – but why introduce an entirely new design?

This brings us to the question of the nature of the 'horseman' image and what it meant for the Turks. The horse had a particular importance in the nomadic lifestyle of the people inhabiting the Steppes, like the Turks. Nearly a millennium earlier, the 'king mounted on a horse' was adopted as a coin type by the Indo-Scythian rulers. Seen from the perspective of Turkic identity, to show the king mounted on a horse appears to be an explainable choice. But the question one may ask is where did the inspiration come from? The most interesting aspect here is the fact that in case of this motif too, we see trans-regional connections with Anatolia, almost contemporarily to the appearance of the motif in Bengal.

The horseman motif first appeared on coins in Anatolia during the reign of the Rum Seljuq Sultan Izz al-Din Qilich Arslan II (1155-1192). He struck copper coins with the motif of the horseman charging to the right, holding a lance (Broome & Novak 2001: 41-42, **FIG 31**). As the coins are undated, and the Sultan had a relatively long reign of 38 years, we cannot ascertain precisely when they were struck. But it is interesting to note that the period of his reign overlaps the Ghurid ascendancy in present-day Afghanistan, and the gradual uptake of Turkic soldiery and cavalrymen in the Ghurid army. The origins of the design are uncertain, but coins of the crusader king Roger II of Antioch which had what is conceivably the Christian image of 'St George kills the dragon' have been suggested as a prototype. But Broome and Novak have voiced their scepticism about this theory, instead suggesting that the image was 'traditionally associated with tribal origins' of the Rum Seljuqs, thereby pointing to its association with the Turkic identity of these rulers (Broome & Novac 2011: 42). Qilich Arslan II's successor Kay Khusrau I (1192-1197) continued with the design on his copper coins, but substituted the lance in the king's hand with a sword (Broome & Novac 2011: 48). During the temporary period of fragmentation that followed the death of Qilich Arslan II, the horseman motif continued on copper coins. Rukn al-Din Sulayman II (1197-1204), who consolidated the Rum Seljuq Sultanate, put it on his silver coins as well (Broome & Novac 2011: 57). The coins in this period showed the horseman holding a mace. The noteworthy point here is that in Anatolia as well as Bengal, the horseman on the coins evidently went through carrying the same repertoire of attributes – a lance, a mace, and a sword, although not always in the same order. These images must have been in circulation in the Turkic world characterized by moving bands of soldiery opportunistically seeking openings in military career at courts like that of the Ghurid rulers of Ghazna, giving them the benefit of mustering the numbers required to undertake major campaigns, like the invasion of India.

So far we have instances where the image – be it the 'Lion and Sun' or the 'horseman' – appears first in Anatolia and then its reception follows in India. However, there is evidence at hand to suggest that this was not always the case. We have at least one numismatic image, a variation on the 'horseman'

theme, which appears first in India and then follows its reception in Anatolia. This coin is so far unpublished and it is worth describing in full detail (**FIG 32**) –

Metal – silver; denomination – Tanka; weight – 10.9 gm

Issuer – Ghiyath al-Din ‘Iwad, governor in Bengal but in the name of Shams al-Din Iltutmish, Sultan of Delhi

Obverse: horseman riding to right in a circle, carrying strung bow and arrow and shooting an arrow with a circular / bifurcated tip to right; Arabic legend beginning with the Shahada in the margins, ….*Muhammad Rasul Allah* and continuing with the AH date as *bi Tarikh*…, but the rest is not visible. Probably the word *al-Ja’iz* follows *bi Tarikh*.

Reverse: Arabic legend in four lines – *al-Sultan al-‘Azam Shams / …(wa) al-Din Abu al-Muzaffar / Iltutmish al-Sultani Nasir / …al-Mumineen*

Evidently this coin is struck in continuation with the ‘horseman’ type coins first issued soon after the conquest of Bengal in AH601 but as explained earlier, the type has now become fully Islamicized, barring the figural depiction of the horseman. The ‘archer’ image of the horseman adds a new depiction to the repertoire, although a horseman with a bow, probably placed in a bow-case on the rump of the horse, had already appeared on silver coins struck by Rukn al-Din ‘Ali Mardan, the rebellious predecessor of ‘Iwad, who had dared to strike coins in his own name between c. AH606-610. ‘Iwad is known to have assumed control of Bengal after quelling the rebellion in AH610 and then ruled until AH624 alternating between independence and subservience to his master, Shams al-Din Iltutmish in Delhi. His first coins are dated AH614-616; they are of the ‘horseman’ type and they bear the name of Iltutmish (Goron & Goenka 2001: 148, types B16-B22). In AH616 he struck coins in his own name for the first time, which did away with the ‘horseman’ design. But these appear to be a sporadic issue, possibly struck as a statement of short-lived independence (Goron & Goenka 2001: 149, types B25-B28). The next issue in his own name is dated AH619 so it is possible that coins in the name of Iltutmish were struck in between and they could well have been of the ‘horseman’ type. Thus, although the date of the coin described above is not discernible, because of the facts that it is in the name of Iltutmish and of a ‘horseman’ type, one could safely place it in the earlier part of ‘Iwad’s tenure. So it is plausible that it was issued sometimes between AH614 and AH619.

The usage of the horseman motif on the coins of the Rum Seljuqs in Anatolia had been fading over the same period. The ‘horseman carrying a mace’ design featured on coins of Rukn al-Din Sulayman II bin Qilich Arslan in both silver and copper. It was abandoned from silver coins struck during the second reign of Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusrau I bin Qilich Arslan (AH601-608/AD1204-1211) but continued on copper coins. It was omitted entirely from coins of Izz al-Din Kay Kaus I (AH608-616/AD 1211-1219)

who ruled a part of Anatolia, and of his successor Ala al-Din Kay Qubadh I (AH616-634/AD1219-237) (Broome & Novak 2011: 65, 77, 91-92). The Rum Seljuq coins of this period are entirely inscriptional, shunning any figural representations. 'Horseman'-type coins were struck in Cilicia, in south Anatolia, by the Armenian Christian king Hetum I (AH623-669/AD1226-1270) as a vassal of Rum rulers Kay Qubadh I and his successor, Ghiyath al-Din Kay Khusrau II but the depiction is a bit different to the ones seen on earlier Anatolian coins (Broome & Novac 2011: 390-391, **FIG 33**). We of course know Kay Khusrau II as the issuer of the short-lived but profuse 'Lion and Sun' figural coinage. At the end of his rule, the Rum Seljuq Sultanate fragmented into eastern and western parts with Izz al-Din Kay Kaus II ruling in the west and Rukn al-Din Qilich Arslan IV in the east. By this time, the Rum Seljuqs had effectively become vassals to the Mongols under the Great Khan, Hulagu.

It is at this time we find that the 'horseman' design revived for a short time – on coins struck at Sivas, in the name of Rukn al-Din Qilich Arslan IV, which are dated AH646 (Broome & Novak 2011: 189). Although they are issued almost thirty years after the 'horseman' coin of Iltutmish just described, the similarity in the composition of the horseman design is surprising. The direction and the general posture of the horse is similar, so is the position of the archer and even small and seemingly unimportant details, such as the knotted tail of the horse, appear to correspond to each other. Another noteworthy feature is the arrow, which on both coins is distinctly of a different type than that with the usual pointed tip. On the coin of Iltutmish, it appears to have an annulet tip, whereas on the coin of Qilich Arslan IV, it has a bifurcated tip. Broome and Novak have remarked that such arrows were used for 'stunning' the prey during a hunt (Broome & Novac 2011: 188), and thus the depiction of the Seljuq Sultan is as a horseman hunter. It is very interesting to note that the motif on Qilich Arslan's coins matches more closely with that on the coin of Iltutmish, struck in faraway Bengal, than the one found on coins of king Hetum I the Armenian ruler of Cilicia, which were struck closer in both space and time, and as a vassal of the Rum Seljuqs.

Epilogue: Coin motifs and Trans-culturation

The similarity in motifs adopted on coins of closely contemporaneous yet spatially distant ruling authorities brings us back to the debate about their purpose and deployment in creating and analysing wider anthropological narratives involving trans-culturation. Very evidently, this sort of similarity would not occur unless there was a 'point of contact'. The possibility of that point of contact being through trade, or political activities between India and Anatolia, is remote simply because there is no evidence of it between he Rum Seljuqs in Anatolia and the Qarlughs in Sindh, or other Turks further east in Bengal. However, there are two aspects which might have provided opportunities for such 'praxis'.

The first of these is the notion of kinship and identity, and the socio-political dynamics that these factors would bring in. The single factor that links the Qarlughs in Sindh, or the early Islamic rulers in Bengal,

and the Seljuqs of Rum, was that they were all 'Turks'. The employment of certain motifs, like the 'Lion and Sun' emblem, reflects deeper identity shifts amongst them, such as the propensity towards 'Persianization' which the Rum Seljuqs show, that are also attested by other similar conscious decisions, such as changes in onomastic and forms of governance. However, these shifts were not shared by all Turks – the Qarlughs in Sindh did not realty portend and aspire to be culturally 'Persian' in any way. However, they did consider themselves as 'Turks' and therefore could have translated the emblem adopted by another ruler that shared the kinship as a higher and exotic mean to emphasize shared kinship. The image of the horseman, culturally associated with nomadic Steppe lifestyle for a long time, feeds in a similar way into the notion of being a 'kinship hallmark'. The fact that the adoption of these images on coins from Anatolia and India is a chronologically a two-way process indicates that they must have circulated, received and consumed as part of a broader 'pan-Turkic' imaginary.

The fact that the Turkic people moved, and often moved over vast distances, could have provided the visual praxis for the images to be cross-pollinated in such a fashion. The mainstay of Turkic circulation was the soldiery which moved from one ruling entity to the other, but also sometimes settling in their new lands of adoption. Andre Wink has mentioned the factual detail that over 6000 Khalaj and Ghuzz Turks went over to the Seljuqs at Herat in 1152. Wink also mentions the settlement of Seljuq Turks in the Juggaur district of Awadh as early as AD1184, when they "allegedly accepted the governorship of the province on behalf of Shihab ad-Din and colonized numerous villages in the area". Curiously enough, the descendants of these Seljuq Turks in Awadh claimed their ancestry from 'Rum', with an Oghuz Turk governor of Diyarbakir as their progenitor (Wink 2001: 138). It is interesting to note that Wink's information is quoted from the Gazetteer of the province of Oudh, a colonial 'information gathering' project of the 19th century. While it is plausible that a precise date of settlement like '1184' might not be factually valid, it is equally true that this excerpt shows the memory of the Seljuqs and of Rum was still in circulation among the population of Oudh as late as the 19th century. Perhaps, the close interplays of memory and history would mean there is some grain of truth in it. The fact at its basis is quite indisputable, that Turkic people moved to and settled in far off lands in a relatively short spate of time, which precisely covers the period in which these numismatic images originated and circulated.

By and large therefore, the story of the origin and spread of the 'Lion and Sun' as a numismatic motif between Anatolia and India is important to situate and contextualize the interconnectedness of visual imagery through population movements and the dynamics involving socio-anthropological notions of kinship and identity among nomadic cultures like that of the Turkic people, particularly when they underwent sedentarization. Quite likely, there is more to it than a simply functional monetary reason, because these occurrences are unique insomuch as they are without precedence. The motifs they carry therefore become 'indexical' to a host of themes. A similar circulation, movement and cross-pollination in other aspects of material culture, like architectural motifs, were discussed by Flood. A similar 'dialogue' involving coins re-emphasize their role as 'objects of translation'.

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