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BY

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The Bas-relief of Beharâm Gour (Beharâm V.) at Naksh-i-Rustam, and His Marriage with an Indian Princess.

[Read 17th December 1894, Dr. Gerson
Da Cunha in the Chair.]

The sculptures at Naksh-i-Rustam or on the rock of the mountain, otherwise known as the Mountain of Sepulchres, have long been "the subjects of discussion with the traveller, the artist and the antiquary." Sir Robert Kerr Porter has described at some length "the remains which mark the lower line of the rock and which are attributed to kings of Arsacidian and Sassanian race."¹ The object of this paper is (I) to determine the event, which is intended to be commemorated in the first of the lower bas-reliefs of Naksh-i-Rustam; (II) to describe the event so commemorated; and (III) to examine how far (a) Indian books, (b) Indian coins, and (c) Indian monuments support the description.

I.

Porter, after describing it at some length,² says:—"From the composition of this piece, even as it now appears, shewing a royal union, and, as its more perfect former state is exhibited in the

¹ Porter's Travels, I., p. 529.

² *Ibid*, pp. 530-532. "The first under consideration (Plate XIX) presents itself soon after we pass the tomb in the most eastern direction. Much of it is buried in the earth; the three figures, which are its subject, being now only visible as high as the upper part of the thighs. The two principal are engaged in grasping, with their outstretched arms, a wreath or twisted bandeau, from which hang a couple of waving ends. The first figure, which holds it with his right hand, stands in the right of the sculpture, and appears to be a king. He is crowned with a diadem of a bonnet-shape, round which runs a range of upward fluted ornaments, surmounted with a high balloon-like mass, rising from the middle of the crown. From the imitation of folds in the stone, it is evidently intended to be a decoration of some sort of stuff. A fillet binds the bottom of the head-dress round the forehead; appearing to tie behind, amongst a redundancy of long flowing hair, whence it streams in two waving ends, resembling those from the wreath he is clasping. These loose ribband-like appendages seem badges of Arsacidian and Sassanian sovereignty: and we find them attached to various parts of the

drawing I saw at Shiraz, where a boy with a princely diadem completes the group, I find that it corresponds with a Sassanian silver coin in my possession. On that coin are the profiles of a king, a queen, and a boy. On the reverse, is a burning altar, supported by the same man and woman, the latter holding a ring in her right hand. From the Pelhivi legend which surrounds the coin, it is one of the Baharams, which is there written Vahraran. Comparing certain peculiar circumstances which marked the reign of Baharam the Fifth, surnamed Gour, with the design on the coin, and with the figures on this excavation, I should conclude that the king in both is Baharam the Fifth."¹

So far, we agree with Porter that the Bas-relief belongs to Beharâm Gour, and commemorates an event of his life. But what is that event? Sir Kerr Porter gives an anecdote on the authority of Sir John Malcolm and connects the Bas-relief with that anecdote.

It is an anecdote, which is described by Malcolm, as having been heard by him in 1810, at one of Beharâm Gour's hunting seats. I will describe it here in the words of Malcolm himself, as Porter's version of it differs from it in some material points:—

“Baharam, proud of his excellence as an archer, wished to display it before a favourite lady. He carried her to the plain; an antelope was soon found, asleep. The monarch shot an arrow with such precision as to graze its ear. The animal awoke, and put his hind hoof to the ear, to strike off the fly by which he conceived himself annoyed. Another arrow fixed his hoof to his horn. Baharam turned to the lady, in expectation of her praises: she coolly observed, *Neeko kurden z pur kurden est*; ‘Practice makes perfect.’

regal dress in all these remains of antiquity. His hair, as I observed before, is full, flowing, and curled, having nothing of the stiff wig-appearance so remarkable in the bas-reliefs of the race of Cyrus. The beard of this figure is very singularly disposed. On the upper lip, it is formed like moustachios; and grows from the front of the ear, down the whole of the jaw, in neat short curls; but on the chin it becomes a great length, (which, as I have noticed before, seems to be a lasting attribute of royalty in Persia,) and is tied together, just at the point of the chin, whence it hangs like a large tassel. At his ear is the fragment of an immense pearl, and a string of the same is round his neck. . . . The personage on the left is, without doubt, a woman, the outline of the form making it evident. On her head, we see a large crown of a mural shape. . . . Her right hand clasps the wreath with the king The third figure visible in the group stands behind the king; and from some part of his apparel, appears to be a guard.”

¹ *Ibid*, p. 533.

Enraged at this uncourtly observation, the king ordered her to be sent into the mountains to perish. Her life was saved by the mercy of a minister, who allowed her to retire to a small village on the side of a hill. She lodged in an upper room, to which she ascended by twenty steps. On her arrival she bought a small calf, which she carried up and down the stairs every-day. This exercise was continued for four years; and the increase of her strength kept pace with the increasing weight of the animal. Baharam, who had supposed her dead, after a fatiguing chase stopped one evening at this village. He saw a young woman carrying a large cow up a flight of twenty steps. He was astonished, and sent to inquire how strength so extraordinary had been acquired by a person of so delicate a form. The lady said she would communicate her secret to none but Baharam; and to him only on his condescending to come alone to her house. The king instantly went; on his repeating his admiration of what he had seen, she bade him not lavish praises where they were not due: 'Practice makes perfect,' said she, in her natural voice, and at the same time lifted up her veil. Baharâm recognised and embraced his favourite. Pleased with the lesson she had given him, and delighted with the love which had led her to pass four years in an endeavour to regain his esteem, he ordered a palace to be built on the spot, as a hunting-seat, and a memorial of this event."¹ Having given this story, Porter says "The female figure in the Bas-relief may very fairly be considered this redoubtable queen."² But in order to uphold his theory, that the Bas-relief commemorates the above event of Beharâm Gour's life, Porter seems to take some unauthorized liberty with Malcolm's version of the story. Malcolm calls the woman in the story "a favourite lady," but Porter chooses to call her a "favourite wife" and "a queen."

Now, it appears from Firdousi, that the woman in the story was neither Beharâm's favourite wife nor his queen. She was merely a favourite flute-player. The story of "Practice makes perfect," which Malcolm describes, as having heard at one of Beharâm's hunting-seats, seems to me, to be an amplified version of a well-nigh similar story, described by Firdousi, and I wonder how Firdousi's story had escaped the notice of Malcolm.

¹ History of Persia (1829), Vol. I., p. 94 n. ² Travels, I, p. 535.

It occurred when Beharâm was quite young and was under the tutelage of Namân (نعمان) at the court of Manzar (منذر) of Arabia. The story, as described by Firdousi, runs thus¹:—

Beharâm, who was a very clever hand in hunting, went one day to the chase with Âzdeh, a woman of Roum, who was his favourite flute-player. He came across two antelopes, one male and another female. Beharâm asked Âzdeh, 'Which of the two you wish me to aim at?' She replied, 'A brave man never fights with antelopes, so you better turn with your arrows the female into a male and the male into a female. Then, when an antelope passes by your side, you aim at it an arrow, in such a way, that it merely touches its ear without hurting it, and that when he lays down his ear over the shoulder and raises its foot to scratch it, you aim another arrow in such a way as, to pierce the head, the shoulder and the foot all at the same time.' Beharâm had with him an arrow with two points. He aimed it at the male in such a way that it carried away its two horns, and gave it the appearance of a female. Then he threw two arrows at the female antelope in such a clever way, that they struck her head and fixed themselves over it, so as to give her the appearance of a male with two horns. Then he aimed his arrow at another antelope so as to merely touch its ear. The animal raised its foot to scratch its ear, when Beharâm aimed at it, another arrow, so cleverly that he hit the head, the ear and the foot all at the same time. The woman thereupon shed tears from her eyes, saying it was inhuman on the part of Beharâm to have so killed the poor animal. This enraged Beharâm, who had done all this at her bidding. He said 'It is all a deceit on your part. If I had failed in doing what you ordered me to do, my family would have been put to shame.' With these words he immediately killed her.

Now, it is this story, related by Firdousi, that Malcolm heard in 1810, in another, rather amplified, garb, and it is this story, that Porter thinks, that the device and characters on the Bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam (and the corresponding device and characters on the coins and medals) appear to commemorate. In Firdousi's version, the woman is not mentioned as a queen.

Again in Firdousi's version, there is not that so-called "royal

¹ Calcutta Edition, Vol. III., p. 1467.

union." According to that version, the woman is killed there and then for her impertinent taunt.

Now, is it likely, that a king like Beharâm Gour, who was, as Sir John Malcolm says, "certainly one of the best monarchs who ever ruled Persia," should commemorate on a rock, sanctified as it were by the monuments of his royal ancestors, a foolish act of his boyhood? Porter bases his interpretation of the Bas-relief on Malcolm's story, as heard by him more than a thousand years after the event. But Firdousi's *Shâh-nâmeh* should be a better authority than the oral traditions that had preserved and exaggerated the story. So, if Beharâm had chosen to commemorate the above event of the hunting-ground, he could have more appropriately done that, during the time of his impulsive boyhood, and that somewhere in the very vicinity of the scene of that event, *i.e.*, in Arabia. That something of that sort was actually done in Arabia, not by Beharâm Gour himself, but by Manzar, in whose court he was brought up, appears from another historian Tabari. Tabari¹ thus describes another hunting feat of Beharâm: One day Beharâm, in company with Manzar, went a-hunting. They saw a wild ass running by their side. Beharâm ran after it, but found that it was overtaken by a lion, who was just on the point of devouring it. Beharâm immediately threw an arrow with such dexterity, that it passed, both through the lion and the ass, and killed them both at the same time. Manzar, in order to commemorate this dexterity of Beharâm, ordered a painting of the hunting scene to be drawn on the walls of the palace, where Beharâm lived. So, the proper place of the sculpture of the hunting scene, described by Firdousi, was Arabia, as related by Tabari, and not Persia, as suggested by Porter on the authority of a story related by Malcolm. Again, as according to Firdousi, there was nothing like a "royal union," how can the bas-relief commemorate that event?

Now, we find, that Madame Dieulafoy, an intelligent wife of an intelligent husband, also describes the same story in her book of travels², and gives a painting, which decorated a door-frame in the house, which she occupied in the valley of Eclid. The painting gives a clear idea of Malcolm's story of "Practice makes perfect."

The painting is entitled "Rencontre de Baharam et de son ancienne favourite." It represents the woman as ascending a stair-

¹ Tabari, par Zotenberg II, pp. 111-112.

² La Perse, la Chaldée, et la Susiane, p. 357.

case with a cow on her back, and the king as approaching her on horseback. Then, if Beharâm proposed commemorating what Porter chooses to call a "royal union," he would have produced a bas-relief of the type presented in the painting as given by Madame Dieulafoy, and not of the type actually found at present, which seems to be more dignified, and has every appearance of commemorating a more solemn and important event in the life of the king.

Then comes the question, if we reject Porter's interpretation of the bas-relief, what is a more probable interpretation? What other event in the life of Beharâm Gour it is, that the bas-relief proposes to commemorate?

I think, it is the event of Beharâm Gour's marriage with the Indian princess Sepihnud that the Bas-relief proposes to commemorate. It commemorates the confirmation of that marriage at Âzer Goushasp, one of the most celebrated, if not the most celebrated, fire-temples of ancient Irân.

Though Porter has misinterpreted the device and the characters of the Bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam, we should feel indebted to him, for indirectly putting us in the right track of identifying another event of Beharâm Gour's life as the one sought to be commemorated on the rock. We said above, that Porter determined, that the device and the characters on the bas-relief corresponded with those on a coin of Beharâm Gour in his possession (*vide* No. 10, Plate I., Vol. I., Pinkerton's Essay on Medals, 1808). Having interpreted, with the help of Malcolm's story of "Practice makes perfect," the device and the characters of the Bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam, Porter proceeds to interpret the device and the characters on the coin in a similar way. But, in doing so, he omits to explain the fact—and that the most important fact—that a fire-altar stands between the king and the queen. If the coin commemorates the event of the "Practice makes perfect" story, what has the fire-altar to do with it? Of course, we know that there are other coins of Beharâm Gour (Plate VII., fig. 8, Numismatic Illustration of the Rule of the Sassanians in Persia by E. Thomas) and of other Sassanian kings on which also we find fire-altars. But none of these coins have a woman's picture on them. The picture of a woman on this coin in question, with the fire-altar between her and the king, seems to have a particular signification.

“On the numerous coins of other Sassanian kings,” says Ousley, “the fire-altar is merely guarded by two armed men, one on each side, like those figures which our heralds entitle the supporters.”¹

Now Ousley tries to explain the device and the characters on the coin in quite another way. Several coins and medals of king Beharâm have been discovered with similar devices and characters. Ousley thus describes them: “The obverse exhibiting her (the queen’s) profile close to that king’s head, whilst on the reverse we behold her (the queen) standing near the Zoroastrian flame, which she and Baharam, an altar being between them, seem to regard with veneration, perhaps nourishing it with fragrant or costly substances.”² Ousley thinks it possible, though rash to affirm, that the queen on the medals of Beharâm was “Sepinud whom Baharam selected among the loveliest princes of India”³ He thinks that the fire-altar on these coins and medals is the fire-altar of the celebrated fire-temple of Âzer Goushasp. Again Beharâm is represented on the medal as holding something in his hand. As to that, Ousley says: “What Beharâm holds does not distinctly appear on these medals; but Firdousi describes him as grasping the ‘barsom’ برسم (small twigs or branches of a certain tree used in religious ceremonies) when proceeding to the Fire-altar with his beautiful Sepinud.”⁴

Thus, we find, that as Ousley has pointed out, the coin of Beharâm Gour, with the king and queen standing on each side of a fire-altar, commemorates the “royal union” of Beharâm Gour with the Indian princess Sepinud, and not the meeting of Beharâm Gour with a favourite lady named Âzdeh. It commemorates a solemn event in the life of the king, and not a foolish act.

Thus then, if, with the help of Ousley’s interpretation, we come to the conclusion, that the coin of Beharâm Gour commemorates the event of the confirmation of the king’s marriage with the Indian princess Sepinud, our work of interpreting the device and the characters on the bas-relief at Naksh-i-Rustam is easy, because it is Porter himself, who has determined, that the device and characters in both correspond. The king and queen on the bas-relief are, therefore, Beharâm and his Indian queen Sepinud. Sir Kerr Porter refers to the third figure on the bas-relief as that of a guard. “He holds up

¹ Travels in Persia, Vol. I., p. 140. ² Travels in Persia, Vol. I., p. 139.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140, n. 72.

his right hand in the attitude of enjoining silence.”¹ I think it is the figure of the officiating priest in the above temple of Âzer Goushasp. Ousley is mistaken in saying that Beharâm is represented by Firdousi as holding a “barsom” in his hand. What Firdousi says is, that the head priest of the temple advances with the Barsom in his hand, to admit the Indian queen into the Zoroastrian religion. I will give here in full, Firdousi’s account of the confirmation ceremony of Beharâm’s marriage with Sepinud, which, I think, it is the purpose of the bas-relief to commemorate. The description reminds a modern Parsee of Nân (a word which is the contraction of Sanskrit स्नान) ceremony, which precedes the marriage ceremony. Firdousi says:—

“The king and his army then got over their horses and went to the land of Âzar Gushasp. He gave a good deal of his wealth in charity to the poor and gave more to the needy who concealed their needs. The worshipper (in charge) of the fire of Zarthôsht went before him with *bâj* and *barsom* in hand. The king led Sepinud before him. He taught her the religion and its manners and customs. He purified her with the good religion and with holy water, and the impurities of a foreign race were removed from her.”

We have finished the task of examining Porter’s interpretation of the device and characters on the bas-relief of Beharâm Gour at Naksh-i-Rustam, and of substituting another interpretation in its place, on the authority of Ousley’s possible interpretation of the corresponding device and characters on a coin of Beharâm Gour. We will conclude this paper, with a short account of Beharâm Gour’s visit to India and of his marriage with Sepinud, as given in the Shâh-nâmeh. Firdousi’s account gives us a glimpse of the court of an Indian Râjâ, as seen by a Persian prince.

II.

It appears from the Shâh-nâmeh that in the reign of Beharâm Gour (A. D. 417—438) Kanoj was the capital of Northern India. Shangel (شنگل) was the appellation of the then ruler of India. His country extended from Hindustân (the country on the banks of the Indus) to the frontiers of China. He demanded tribute from China and Sind (چین و سند). The Vazir of Beharâm Gour once excited the ambition of his master to conquer the country of this powerful king. Beharâm asked a friendly but threatening letter to be written

¹ Porter’s Travels I., p. 532.

to Shangel. I give here the full text of the letter from the Persian king to the Indian Rájá, to give an idea of the way in which letters were then written :

“May the blessings of God be upon him, who seeks His blessings. He is the Master of Existence and of Non-existence. Everything in the world has its equal, but God is unique. Of all things that He bestows upon His man, whether he be a servant of the throne or the possessor of a crown, there is nothing in this world better than reason, which enlightens the low as well as the great. He, who gets pleased with reason, never behaves badly in the world. He, who chooses virtue never repents. One never drinks an evil from the water of wisdom. Wisdom releases a man from his calamity. May one never be overtaken with calamity ! The first evidence of (one’s possessing) wisdom is, that he is always afraid of doing an evil, that he keeps his body under control and that he seeks the world with an eye of wisdom. Wisdom is the crown of kings. It is the ornament of all great men.” After this short dissertation on virtue and wisdom, Beharâm Gour addresses the Indian king directly as follows:—

“You know not (how to remain in) your own limit ; you attach your soul to yourself. Although I am the ruler at this time, and although all good or evil must proceed from me, you are ruling as a king. How can there be justice then ? Injustice proceeds from every direction. It does not befit kings to be hasty and to be in alliance with evil-thinkers. Your ancestors were our vassals. Your father was a vassal of our kings. None of us has ever consented to the tribute from Hindustan falling into arrears. Look to the fate of the Khâkân of Chin, who came to Irân from Chinâ ? All, that he had brought with him, was destroyed, and he was obliged to turn away from the evil, which he himself had done. I find, that you have similar manners, traits of character, dignity and religion. I am in possession of instruments of war and all the necessary means. The whole of my army is unanimous (to go to war) and well prepared. You cannot stand against my brave warriors. There is no commander (worthy of the name) in the whole of India. You have a conceited high opinion of your power ; you carry a river before a sea. However, I now send you a messenger, who is eloquent, wise and high minded. Either send tribute or prepare for war and tighten your belt. Greetings from us to the souls of those, with whom justice and wisdom are as well mixed up, as the warp and the woof.”

Beharâm Gour then addressed this letter of threat to "Shangel, the Commander of Hind (which extends) from the river of Kanoj to the country of Sind." He chose himself as a messenger to carry this letter, and under the pretence of going for hunt, started with a few chosen and confidential followers for India and crossed the Indus, which Firdousi calls the river of the country of magicians (آب جادوستان). When he went to the grand palace of the Indian king, he saw it guarded by armed men and elephants and heard bells and Indian clarions playing. He was received into the audience hall with all honour due to the envoy of a great king. Beharâm found the Indian palace to be a magnificent one, with crystal on its ceiling, and silver, gold and gems on the walls. The king had a brother and a son with him in the audience hall, when Beharâm communicated to him the message from the Court of Persia. He submitted the letter before the Indian prince with the following words:—

"O king of kingly descent! a son like whom no mother in the world has given birth to, the great exalted (King of Persia), who is the cause of happiness to his city, by whose justice, poison becomes an antidote of poison, to whom all great men pay tributes, and to whom lions fall a prey, who, when he takes the sword in a battle, turns a desert into a sea of blood, who in generosity is like a cloud of spring, and before whom, treasure and wealth are nothing, sends a message to your Majesty of India and a Pahlavi letter on satin."

The Indian king, in reply, refused with indignation to pay any tribute to the Persian king. In this reply, he described his country to be very rich and to be full of amber, aloe, musk, camphor, medicinal drugs, gold, silver and precious stones. He said, he had eighty princes under his sovereignty, acknowledging him as the paramount power. His country extended from Kanoj to the frontiers of Irân and to the country of Saklab (the Slavs). All the sentinels in Hind and Khoten and Chin proclaimed his name. He had the daughter of the Fugfoor of Chin as a wife. A son was born to him of this wife from Chin. He had an army of 300,000 men under him. He had twelve hundred dependents who were his blood relations.

After the communication of the message and the above reply from the Indian king, Beharâm had a friendly fight in the presence of the king, with one of his best warriors. The superior strength in the fight, and the skill in the art of using the bow and the arrow,

which Beharâm showed, made the king suspect that Beharâm was not an ordinary courtier of the court of Persia, but a man of royal blood. He asked his minister to persuade Beharâm to postpone his departure for some time and stay a little longer at Kanoj, where, he said, the fruit trees gave two crops per year. The Vazir tried to win Beharâm over to the side of the Indian king and to persuade him to make Kanoj his permanent residence. Beharâm refused, and then the king tried to do away with this powerful Persian messenger by requesting him to go to kill a ferocious wolf and a dragon in the vicinity of his city. He expected Beharâm to be killed in the fight with these animals, but to his surprise Beharâm returned victorious.

Now, Shangel had a very beautiful daughter by name (سپینود) Sepinud. He offered the daughter in marriage to Beharâm, hoping that by that marriage he could secure the permanent stay of such a brave general as Beharâm at his Court. Beharâm consented and married Sepinud. One day Beharâm confided to Sepinud the secret of his position and proposed to her to run away from Hindustan to Irân, where he promised to install her as queen. Sepinud consented and asked Beharâm to wait for five days, when the king with all his retinue was expected to go on an annual pilgrimage to a religious place, about 20 furlongs from Kanoj. She said, that the king's absence from the city would be a convenient time to leave the country. Beharâm followed her advice and under the pretence of illness declined to accompany the king. During the absence of the king, he left the country with his queen and marched continuously till he reached the banks of the Indus, across which there was going on a brisk trade. Some of the Irânian merchants on the river recognized Beharâm, but he asked them to keep the secret for some time longer. By this time, Shangel came to know of the flight of his daughter and Beharâm, and followed them in hot pursuit with a large army. He overtook them, but then learning, that his son-in-law was no other than the Persian king Beharâm Gour himself, he was much pleased and returned to his own country. Beharâm, on his return to Irân, took his Indian queen to the then celebrated great fire-temple of Âder-Goushasp, and got her zoroastrianized at the hand of the head priest of the temple.

After some time Shangel paid a friendly visit to Persia, and was accompanied by the following seven tributary princes¹:—The king of

¹ M. Mohl. Small Edition, Vol. VI, p. 50.

Cabul, the king of Sind, the king of the Yogis, king Sandel, king Jandel, the king of Cashmere and the king of Multan. He stayed for two months at the court of Persia, and, a short time before his return, he gave a document to his daughter Sepinud, which expressed his will, that at his death, the throne of Kanoj should pass to his daughter and son-in-law.

Malcolm, in his *History of Persia*,¹ alludes to this episode and considers it to be a romance hardly deserving of notice, but he does not give any reasons for this allegation. It is a matter of great surprise that he should reject, as altogether romantic, an episode described by Firdousi and confirmed by the devices and characters of some of Beharâm's coins, but at the same time believe an episode of the type of 'Practice makes perfect' story. Again, we must bear in mind, that Tabari, who lived 100 years before Firdousi, though he does not go into any details, confirms the fact of Beharâm Gour's visit to India and his marriage with an Indian princess.² Mirkhond confirms this story, not only on the authority of Tabari, but also on that of another historian, Ebn-Athir.³

Firdousi calls the Indian king Shankel or Shangel. It is likely, that the name is derived from Sangala, which was, at the time of Alexander's invasion of India, the capital of the Kathæi, an important tribe living between the Chenab and the Râvi.

III.

Now, not only do Tabari, Ebn-Athir, Mirkhond and other Mahomedar writers confirm the fact of Beharâm Gour's embassy to the court of an Indian Raja, but even (a) Indian books, (b) Indian coins, and (c) Indian monuments confirm the fact.

(a) According to Wilford,⁴ the *Âgni Purâna* refers to the story of Beharâm Gour's marriage with an Indian princess. In his learned paper on Vicramaditya and Salivahana, he relates the Agni Purana story of Gand'barva, a heavenly chorister, who, having incurred Indra's displeasure, was doomed to assume the shape of an ass. Though in the disguise of an ass, he performed a great extraordinary feat to convince the king Tamra-sena of his great power. Having then convinced him, he married his daughter and, after some time,

¹ Vol. I., p. 93.

² *Chronique de Tabari par Zotenberg* Tome II., pp. 123-125.

³ *Mémoires sur diverses Antiquités de la Perse, par Silvestre De Sacy*, p. 337.

⁴ *Asiatic Researches*, IX., pp. 147-151.

disclosed himself in his original human shape. A son was born and he was the third Vicramaditya. Having described this Agni Purana story at some length, Wilford says: "This is obviously the history of Yesdejird, son of Bahrâm Gor, or Bahrâm the ass, king of Persia: the grand features are the same, and the times coincide perfectly. The amours of Bahrâm Gor with an Indian princess are famous all over Persia as well as in India."¹

In order to uphold his theory, that the third Vicramaditya, son of Gand'harva, known as Gadhâ-rupa (*i.e.*, the ass-shaped) in the spoken dialects, was the same as Yesdejird, son of Beharâm Gour, king of Persia, Wilford² produces several facts of similarity in their Indian and Persian stories.

1. As Vicrama was the son of Gadhâ-rupa, *i.e.*, the man with the countenance of an ass, so Yezdejird was the son of Beharâm Gour, *i.e.*, Beharâm the ass, who was so-called from the fact of his great fondness for hunting wild asses.

2. The father of Gadhâ-rupa was, according to the Ayin-i-Akbari, Ati-Brahmâ,³ and the father of Beharâm Gour was Yezdejird who was called Athim.⁴ Thus the Indian Ati-Brahmâ was the same as Persian Athim.

3. The grandfather of Gadhâ-rupa was Brahmâ.⁵ And Beharâm Gour's grandfather was another Bahrâm. So the Indian Brahmâ was the same as Persian Bahrâm.

4. Gadhâ-rupa had "incurred the displeasure of Indra, king of the elevated grounds of Meru or Turkestan, and was doomed by him to assume the shape of an ass, in the lower regions. Bahrâm Gour, or the ass, likewise incurred the displeasure of the Khâcan or mortal king of Meru."⁶ I think the parallel instance of Beharâm Gour's incurring displeasure, which Wilford has referred to above, is not a proper instance, since we learn from the Shâh-nâmeh that the Khâkân of Chin's invasion of the country of Persia, was no way the result of any special displeasure incurred by Beharâm Gour. According to Firdousi, the Khâkân seems to have thought of invading the Persian territories, on finding that Beharâm Gour was occupied a good deal in pleasure and enjoyment, and had neglected

¹ *Ibid*, pp. 149-150.

² *Ibid*, pp. 150-51.

³ Atbirmah. "Gladwin's Translation of Ayeen-Akbery," Vol. II., p. 49.

⁴ Chronique de Tabari par Zotenberg, Vol. II., p. 103.

⁵ Birmahraj. "Gladwin's Ayeen-Akbery," Vol. II., p. 49.

⁶ Asiatic Researches, IX., p. 151.

the proper protection of his territories from foreign invasions. But, if one were to look in the life of Beharâm, for a proper instance of incurring displeasure, it was that, presented by his falling into the disfavour of his father Yezdijird. One day, when the king was holding his court, Beharâm being too much fatigued, fell asleep in the court. This enraged his royal father, who ordered him to be imprisoned.

5. As Gadhâ-rupa was in disguise, when he married the king's daughter, so was Beharâm Gour in disguise, when he married the Indian king's daughter.

These are the five facts referred to by Wilford, to support his theory, that the Gadhâ-rupa of Indian history was the same as Beharâm Gour of Persian history. To these points of similarity pointed out by Wilford, I will add a few more—

1. Wilford says, that several learned Pandits informed him, that "this Gandharva's name was Jayanta."¹ If we take the word to be Sanskrit जयेन *i.e.*, victorious, the Indian name carries the same signification, as the Persian name Beharâm, which is the same as the Avesta word "Verethragna," Pahlavi "Varharân," and means victorious. So the Indian name Jayanta (or rather Jayana) is another form of the Persian name Beharâm.

2. Again, both had to perform an extraordinary feat before winning over the favours of their fathers-in-law. Gadhâ-rupa had to turn the walls of his father-in-law's "city and those of the houses into brass"² before sunrise next day. Beharâm Gour had not such a physically impossible task before him. But, besides showing other feats of physical strength, he had to kill a wolf and a dragon of extraordinary size and strength, which were much dreaded by the people in the neighbourhood.

3. According to Wilford, Ferishta represents the father of the damsel as the "Emperor of India and residing at Canouge."³ And we find from the Shâh-nâmeh, that Firdousi also represents the father of Beharâm Gour's Indian queen, as the king of Hind and as residing at Kanouj.

4. Again, as Wilford⁴ says, according to the Agni Purâna, the father of the damsel is called Sadasvasena, and, according to Firdousi's Shâh-nâmeh, the father of Beharâm Gour's Indian queen is called Sangel or Sankel. There seems to be a similarity in these names.

¹ *Ibid*, p. 148.

² *Ibid*, p. 148.

³ *Ibid*, p. 149.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 149.

5. Again, may I ask, "Is there not any similarity between the name of Oojen (Ujjayini), where, according to Ayeen-Akbari, Gadhâ-rupa's father-in-law is known as Sundersena, and that of Oujon in Persia, where, according to Kerr Porter,¹ the Persian traditions placed the hunting scenes of Beharâm Gour?"

Wilford says that the Hindus "shew, to this day (1809), the place where he (Beharâm Gour or Gadhâ-rupâ) lived, about one day's march to the north of Baroach, with the ruins of his palace. In old records, this place is called Gad'hendra-puri or the town of the lord of asses. The present name is Goshêrâ or Ghojârâ for Ghosha-râyâ or Ghosha-râja: for, says my Pandit, who is a native of that country, the inhabitants, being ashamed of its true name, have softened it into Ghoshera, which has no meaning."²

According to Firdousi, Sangel, the father-in-law of Beharâm Gour, had made what we should call a 'will' in Hindî characters, "which somewhat resembled the Pahlavi characters." In it he said, "I have given Sepinud in marriage to King Beharâm with proper religious rites and not by way of anger or out of revenge. I have entrusted her to this illustrious sovereign. May this Emperor live long. May the great men of the world be obedient to him. When I pass away from this transient world, King Beharâm shall be the King of Kanouj. Do not turn away from the orders of this monarch. Carry my dead body to the fire. Give all my treasures, all my country, my crown, my throne, and my royal helmet to King Beharâm."³

Thus we see, that, according to Firdousi, the throne of Kanouj passed by virtue of its Hindu king's last testament, to the Persian king Beharâm Gour and his heirs. This confirms what Wilford says that "The dynasty of the Gardabhinâs is probably that of the descendants and successors of Bahrâm Gur in Persia. The Princes in the north-western parts of India were vassals of the Persian kings, at a very early period; and the father-in-law of Bahrâm Gur used to send a yearly tribute to them."⁴

To support his theory, that the dynasty of the Gardabhinâs was probably that of the descendants and successors of Beharâm Gour in Persia, Wilford⁵ gives other instances of Indian tribes and dynasties, that had descended from the Persian stock. Shirovyeh or Kobâd, the son of Khosru Purviz, had ordered, somewhat against

¹ Travels, Vol. II., pp. 13-15. ² Asiatic Researches, IX., p. 151.

³ Calcutta Edition, Vol. III., p. 1582. Mohi, small Edition, VI., pp. 53-54.

⁴ Asiatic Researches, Vol. IX., p. 155. ⁵ Ibid, pp. 233-241

his wish, seventeen of his brothers (fifteen according to Firdousi), to be put to death. It was believed in the West, *i.e.*, in Persia, that they were so murdered. Firdousi says that they were so murdered, and that Khosru wept bitterly when he heard this. But other authors¹ say that it was merely a ruse, and that they were in fact sent away to India. "There is hardly any doubt," says Wilford, "that the kings of Oudypoor and the Marhâttas, are descended from them (the Persian princes) and their followers."² Mr. William Hunter, in his narrative of a journey from Agra to Oujein in 1790,³ says, "The Raja of Oudipoor is looked on as the head of all the Rajpoot tribes, and has the title of Ráná by way of pre-eminence. His family is also regarded with high respect by the Musulmans themselves, in consequence of a curious tradition, relating to his genealogy. He is said to be descended, in the female line, from the celebrated Anushirwan who was king of Persia."

(b) Having shown at some length, that Indian books and traditions confirm the fact of Beharâm Gour's visit to India and his marriage with an Indian princess, the daughter of the King of Kanouj, we will now examine how far some of the old Indian coins support the fact of Beharâm Gour's visit to India. We are indebted to Prinsep for the valuable help on this subject. In his essay on Saurâshtra coins, he says that the type of that series of Indian coins is an "example of imitation of a Grecian original,"⁴ and that "a comparison of these coins with the coins of the Arsakian and Sassanian dynasties of Persia, which are confessedly of Greek origin,"⁵ satisfactorily proves that. Then referring to several coins in that group (figs. 13-15, plate XXVII.), he says,⁶ "The popular name for these rude coins—of silver and copper—is, according to Burnes, in Gujarât 'Gadhia-ká paisá,' 'Ass-money,' or rather, 'the money of Gadhia,' a name of Vikramáditya, whose father Jayanta, one of the Gandharbas, or heavenly choristers, is reputed to have been cursed by Indra, and converted into an ass. Wilford, in his Essay on the Era of Vikramáditya (Asiatic Researches, IX., 155), endeavours to trace, in this story, the Persian fable of Bahrâm Gor's amours with an Indian princess, whence were descended the Gardabhina dynasty of Western India (gardabha being the Sanskrit equivalent for

¹ *Ibid*, p. 156. ² *Ibid*, p. 156. ³ Asiatic Researches, Vol. VI., p. 8.

⁴ Essays on Indian Antiquities, by James Prinsep, edited by E. Thomas, Vol. I., 335.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp 341-42.

gor, 'an ass'). The story is admitted into the prophetic chapters of the Agni-purána, and is supported by traditions all over the country. Remains of the palace of this Vikrama are shewn in Gujarát, in Ujjain, and even at Benâres! The Hindûs insist that this Vikrama was not a paramount sovereign of India, but only a powerful king of the western provinces, his capital being Cambát or Cambay: and it is certain that the princes of those parts were tributary to Persia from a very early period. The veteran antiquarian, Wilford, would have been delighted, could he have witnessed the confirmation of his theories afforded by the coins before us, borne out by the local tradition of a people now unable even to guess at the nature of the curious and barbarous marks on them. None but a professed studier of coins could possibly have discovered on them the profile of a face after the Persian model, on one side, and the actual Sassanian fire-altar on the other; yet such is indubitably the case, as an attentive consideration of the accumulation of lines and dots on figs. 13, 16, will prove.

. Should this fire-altar be admitted as proof of an Indo-Sassanian dynasty in Sauráshtra, we may find the date of its establishment in the epoch of Yesdijird, the son of Bahrâm Gor; supported by the concurrent testimony of the Agni-puráná, that Vikrama, the son of Gadhárupa, should ascend the throne of Málvá (Ujjain) 753 years after the expiation of Chánakya or A. D. 441."

Thus we find that the legend on a set of old Indian coins, popularly known as 'Gadhia-ká paisa,' supports the fact of Beharâm Gour's visit to India and his marriage with an Indian princess.

(c) Lastly, coming to the old monuments of India, we find that some of the paintings at the Ajunta Caves support the fact of Beharâm Gour's visit to India. Mr. James Campbell thus describes one of the paintings in Cave XVII. at Ajunta.¹ "On the left end of the ante-chamber, below, a Buddha sits in the middle in the teaching posture; two celestial fly-flap-bearers stand by his side; and above are the usual angels on clouds bringing garlands. On the right side sit about sixteen friars, all bare-headed and dressed alike. Above them are three horses, on one of which is a man in Iránian dress with peaked cap, jerkin and trousers; and, in the background behind these, is an elephant on which sits a great lady with her

¹ *Bombay Gazetteer*, Khandeish, Vol. XII., p. 556.

children and servant behind her, all making obeisance to the Buddha. At the Buddha's feet, two chiefs sit making profound obeisance to the Buddha. . . . To the right and behind him are two with smaller crowns, the one to the right also on a cushion. To the left is another with a small crown, and, beyond him a decidedly Persian personage, with high-peaked cap, short black beard and long hair; while in front of him a jewelled chieftain is seated. To the left are four horsemen, one bearded and completely clothed, probably a servant of the prince or chief. Behind the whole group are two more Sassanians and two horses, the riders in which have the Sassanian dress and peaked caps. Above are two elephants, on one of which is a man bare-headed, and with the Sassanian ribbons or banderoles, at the back of his neck, while, behind him, a curious-looking attendant makes obeisance. On the other elephant are several Sassanian people, all engaged in the same way, while three pennants are carried over their heads and three spears in front, with tassels attached to them. In the background beyond this elephant, another fair Sassanian carries an umbrella. Mr. Fergusson considers that this scene represents Baharâm Gaur's (420—440) embassy to the king of Mâlwa."

Now, if this painting really commemorated the event of Beharâm Gour's embassy to India, as suggested by Fergusson, I think, it was the work of Beharâm Gour's father-in-law Shangel. We learn from Firdousi, that he was in the habit of paying annual visits to a sacred place in the vicinity, and that it was during one of such visits or pilgrimages that Beharâm Gour arranged with his queen Sepinud, to leave secretly the court of Shangel and to return to Persia. It is possible, that Ajunta was the place of the king's annual visits, and that, when he subsequently came to know of the royal descent of his son-in-law, he caused a painting of his royal embassy to be painted on one of the caves there. According to Firdousi, the place of pilgrimage was 20 farsangs, i.e., about 60 miles from Kanouj. Of course, this distance falls much short of the actual distance between the places now known as Kanouj and Ajunta, but it is possible, that Firdousi meant to say 20 farsangs from the furthest limit of Kanouj which was then an extensive province. Again, it is possible that Firdousi, when he speaks of the place as that of (بُت) Bût-worship (idol-worship), means Budha worship.¹

¹ Calcutta Edition, III., p. 1574; Mohl, small edition, VI., p. 40.