

Lexicons differ. The *Qāmūs* says plainly that it is a foreign word like قراط and ديباج which the Arabs of old did not know and so borrowed from other peoples. *TA*, iii, 211, says that the authorities were uncertain—واختلفت في أصله, and Jawharī tries to explain it as an Arabic word.

The form دينار seems an invention to explain the plu. دنائير, though it may be intended to represent the Phlv. 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭩 *dēnār*, used for a gold coin in circulation in the Sasanian empire,¹ and which is the origin of the Pers. دينار. The Phlv. 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭩, however, is not original, and the oft suggested connection with the Skt. दीनार, a gold coin or gold ornament, is hardly to the point, for this is itself derived from the Gk. δηνάριον,² and the Phlv. word was doubtless also borrowed directly from the Greek.

δηνάριον from the Lat. *denarius* was in common use in N.T. times, and occurs in the non-literary papyri.³ The Greeks brought the word along with the coin to the Orient in their commercial dealings, and the word was borrowed not only into Middle Persian, but is found also in Arm. դենար,⁴ in Aram. ܕܢܐܪ, which occurs both in the Rabbinic writings (Levy, *Wörterbuch*, i, 399, 400) and in the Palmyrene inscriptions (De Vogüé, *Inscr*, vi, 3 = *NSI*, No. 115, p. 273),⁵ and in Syr. ܕܢܐܪ. The *denarius aureus*, i.e. the δηνάριον χρυσοῦν, became known in the Orient as simply δηνάριον, and it was with the meaning of a gold coin that the word came into use in Arabic.⁶

Now as it was coins of Greek and not of Persian origin that first came into customary use in Arabia, we can dismiss the suggested Persian origin. Had the word come directly from Greek, however,

¹ *PPGI*, 110; *Karnāmak*, ii, 13; *Šāyast*, Glossary, 160.

² Monier Williams, *Sanskrit Dictionary*, 481.

³ Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, ii, 306: "The term *denarius* replaces that of *drachma* which was regularly in use before the time of Diocletian; the Neronian *denarius* reintroduced by Diocletian being reckoned as equivalent to the *drachma* and as πέντες of a talent."

⁴ Hübschmann, *Arm. Gramm*, i, 346. Brockelmann in *ZDMG*, xlvii, 11.

⁵ The actual form is ܕܢܐܪܝܢ with the Aram. plu. ending.

⁶ Zambaur in *EI*, i, 975, thinks that the shortened form of the name became current in Syria after the reform of the currency by Constantine I (A.D. 309-319).