

Chinese Chops - A Bibliographical Survey of Western Publications

by Wolfgang Bertsch

Formerly most collectors of Trade Dollars and Spanish-American coins refused to accept specimens bearing Chinese chops which in their opinion ruined the coins as much as to make them nearly worthless. In recent years, however, Chinese countermarks and their historical background have ever more attracted the interest of collectors and specialists and numerous articles on this subject were published in Western countries.

When compiling this survey, I would have liked to have included Chinese publications on chops, but unfortunately I do not read Chinese. While going through many Chinese numismatic journals which were founded after the Cultural Revolution, I could only trace a single issue of *Zhongguo Qianbi* (China Numismatics, Nr. 23, 4th issue, Beijing, 1988) which contains three articles on the chop "gong" ("工"), one of them illustrating a Mexican Colonial 8 Reales and four Republican Pesos, bearing this chop.

Nevertheless I believe that Chinese numismatic works published earlier on might include many more references on chops and on the practice of chopping. Evidence for this may be the following translation into English of a highly important work on the history of China's currency: Peng Xinwei: *A Monetary History of China* (Zhongguo Huobi Shi), Western Washington University 1994, translation by Edward H. Kaplan of the third original edition, which was published in Shanghai in 1965. While giving a detailed account of all foreign dollars which circulated in China and of pawn shops and enterprises which can be considered as forerunners of banks, the Chinese author mentions the practice of chopping only very briefly in the context of the "God of Longevity Silver Cake" ("Old Man dollar"): "The pits were cut into them in the course of their circulation so as to test their genuineness. This was practice of the time." (Vol. 2, p. 677). And when discussing the Guangdong Dragon dollar he remarks: "Nevertheless, some surviving examples of this coin bear chop marks, which shows that they had been circulated" (Vol. 2, p. 684). However, I could find only one reference on the chopping of Spanish American coins. Discussing the use of silver in China during the Ming Dynasty, Peng Xinwei writes: "Some 30 or 40 coarse silver strips were unearthed in Tainan city, Taiwan, at the end of the Qing. They bore Spanish silver coin designs, and came in large and small sizes. The large ones weighed 0.7 ounce and the small ones 0.3 ounce. They also bore stamped Chinese characters like *yong* (eternal), and *wang* (king). Evidently they had circulated on Taiwan. Such irregular silver strips were made from the sixteenth century on in Lima and Potosi in the New World. Their weights were the same as the official silver dollar and half-dollar." (Vol. 2, p. 570). The discovery of this interesting hoard (unfortunately no illustration and no indication of the date when it was buried is given) allows us to consider the possibility that Spanish American coins may have been chopped already during the late Ming or early Qing dynasty.

One can only hope that in future Chinese specialists will publish more articles on our subject, since Chinese numismatists would certainly be the most qualified to write about chopping and chops and would be favoured by the

advantage of having access to Chinese archives which so far seem almost untouched as far as our subject is concerned.

The large majority of coins found with Chinese chops being of Spanish American origin, it is only natural that among Western numismatic writers, those of Spanish language have contributed a considerable number of articles and even a book on the subject of Chinese countermarks. Most of these publications are little known among English speaking numismatists and in giving this selection of Western publications dealing with chops I put the focus on numismatic literature from Latin America and Spain.

It is preferable to avoid the widely used term "chopmark" and to speak of "chop" or "countermark", since "chop" contains already the connotation "mark" and hence the term "chopmark" is a pleonasm which it would be better not to use. The expression "counterstamp" should be reserved to stamps which have an official character and were usually applied to coins by order of some government. Since "chops" are private marks, tolerated or sanctioned but not ordered by governments, one should not speak of "counterstamping" when referring to "chopping", as has been done by some authors who wrote about chops.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Cunietti-Ferrando, director of the Numismatic Museum of the Banco de la Nación (Buenos Aires) and of "Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas" for providing details of several Latin American publications on Chinese Chops, to Mr. Oliveira Cesar of Rosario (Argentina) for presenting me with his book on chops and letting me examine his collection of chopped Spanish American coins, to Mr. Georg H. Förster (Germany) for kindly contributing details of 13 titles included in this survey and to the editors of and contributors to "Chopmark News" with whose help I could add numerous English language titles.

The compiler hopes that this survey will give a general idea about the little which is known on chops in the West, that it will help avoiding constant repetitions which unfortunately have characterized quite a number of publications in Western languages and that it will encourage further research in this fascinating, but still largely unexplored subject.

1. Anonymous: 'Monedas contramarcadas en China'. *Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias históricas*. Tomo IX, Nr. 30, Buenos Aires, April 1982.

The author reports that in Chinese coastal towns and in the Philippines chops were applied on coins from Argentina, Bolivia, United States, Indochina, France, Japan and particularly from Mexico - during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

2. Anonymous: 'Algo mas sobre las monedas hispanoamericanas con resellos chinos'. *Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas*, Tomo IX, Nr. 31, Buenos Aires, June 1982.

3. Anonymous (author is probably Bruce W Smith): 'Chopmark Collection to be Sold'. *Journal of East Asian Numismatics*. Vol. 1, Nr. 2, Cambridge Massachusetts, September-October 1994, p. 6.

Gives a brief account of the collection of chopped coins of the late Frank Rose consisting of more than 700 world coins with Chinese chops. The note also includes a short introduction to the practice of chopping in southern China.

4. Anonymous: *The Reverend Ernest Box. An Englishman's collection of Chinese Coins.* (Exhibition leaflet of the Coin Department of the British Museum), London, n.d. (1997).

"From the eighteenth century, silver had become the main medium of tax collection and for government payments. Silver was imported from Central and South America. In the coastal areas, through which the silver was imported, taxes came to be payable in the form in which the silver arrived, i.e. in silver dollars. Many of those that have survived have Chinese "chopmarks" on them."

5. Anonymous: *Vom Thaler zum Dollar 1486 - 1986.* Staatliche Münzsammlung München, 1986, chapter 43.

Mentions "chopmarks" giving E. Kann as reference.

6. Basso, Aldo P.: *Coins, Medals and Tokens of the Philippines 1728 - 1974.* Manila (publication date unknown).

p. 23: "The 'Dos Mundos' coins were widely accepted everywhere and their integrity was never questioned. In contrast, when the bust-portrait types were introduced, every Chinese merchant felt it necessary to stamp the coin with his mark to attest to the degree of fineness and quality of the coin. Each coin thus came to bear as many 'chop-marks' as the number of Chinese who handled it and these chop-marked coins became more and more abundant as the silver went back and forth in trade."

7. Bertsch, Wolfgang: 'A Tibetan Countermark on a Spanish American Coin?' *Chopmark News*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, October 1993, p. 105-106. Also published in ONS NL Nr. 139, Winter 1994.

A Mexican Carolus Dollar of 1799 bearing several chops is illustrated and the possibility is discussed that one of the chops, while being of Chinese origin, may have been intended as an imitation of a Tibetan character to make the coin more acceptable to Tibetan traders.

8. Bordeaux, Paul: Les fausses piastres de Birmingham. *Revue Française de Numismatique*. Rollier Feudent, Paris 1903, p. 1-16.

Was also published in Spanish (by Adolfo Herrera): "Fabricación en Birmingham el año 1796 de falsos reales de a ocho españoles contramarcados en China", *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Madrid 1910.

Republished in Spanish in *Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas*, Vol. XVII, Nr. 74, Buenos Aires, October 1990, pp. 7-16

The following English translation exists: "Counterfeit Spanish piastres issued at Birmingham." *Spink's Monthly Numismatic Circular*, Vol. XXIII, London, p. 558-564.

The author publishes a French document which in 1797 was sent by the French Foreign Ministry to the Spanish ambassador in London and which describes in some detail the falsification of Spanish-American 8 reales coins which were at that time produced in Birmingham and - with the knowledge of British authorities - were used by the East India Company for its dealings with India and China. Since huge numbers of these counterfeit coins entered China at the end of the eighteenth century, examining the alloy of each coin and chopping it, if it was found to be genuine and of

good silver, became common practice in China's main ports which were open to foreign trade.

9. Bowers, David Q.: *Silver Dollars & Trade Dollars of the United States - A Complete Encyclopaedia.* Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, 1993.

Reproduces a report by Douglas Cass who was able to sort through several bags of US. Trade dollars and Spanish-American coins which had been smuggled to Hong Kong from mainland China in the early 1980s. Here are some parts of it:

p. 902: "Among the unsorted trade dollars I saw, probably three-quarters of them had chopmarks."

p. 903: "I found chopmarks on different types of coins to be interesting, and I put aside ones that were unusual. I decided to prepare a Manuscript on Oriental chopmarks. My book is going to be called *The Chopmarked Coins of the Cathey Trade*, and will cover all types of coins." (...)

"It became evident that there were a lot of official government chopmarks. Many official chopmarks from the Chinese provinces had Manchu characters. Most official marks were put on trade dollars in the field near Miss Liberty's knee." (...)

"Chopmarks were applied to trade dollars until the Hong Kong government outlawed it, after which they went into ink stamps. Chopping of coins was done for various reasons, including as evidence of authenticity, or to mark them for use as gaming tokens. I am speaking of various coins, not particularly trade dollars. Chopmarks were used throughout that section of the world by many different countries."

Douglas Cass reports rumours that Hans Schulman had obtained original chopmark punches and was using them on several kinds of coins, usually applying two Chinese chops, or two Thai chops together on one coin.

10. Bowers, David Q.: 'Trade dollars occupy collector's imagination. Many varieties available'. *Coin World*, 31 August 1992.

Contains a brief reference to the chopping of Trade dollars.

11. Bowers, David Q.: 'There is another way to collect Trade Dollars. Try chopmarked versions'. *Coin World*, September 14, 1992.

The author quotes from F. M. Rose's "Chopmarks" and recommends to collect chopped trade dollars, since these are available at lower prices than their unchopped counterparts and are literally two coins in one - a United States Trade dollar and a Chinese coin.

12. Brunk, Gregory G.: *Merchant Countermarks on World Coins.* World Exonumia Press. Rockford, Illinois 1989.

Contains a paragraph entitled "Chopmarks" where the author quotes from Robert Chalmers (see below) and goes on to state "The only chop that has been identified to a specific merchant is the Yong Kim Hong countermark from Thailand."

For a review of this book, see: Fiero, David B. in *Numismatics International Bulletin*, Vol. 26, Nr. 1, Dallas, January 1991, pp. 21-22

13. Burzio, Humberto: *Diccionario de la Moneda Hispano-Americana.* Santiago de Chile 1958, Vol. I, p. 137-138 (article "China").

The following colonial coins of Latin America bearing Chinese chops, are listed: seventeen 8 Reales of the Mexico

Mint, ten 8 Reales of the Potosí Mint, one 2 Reales of the Lima Mint, one 8 Reales and one 4 Reales of the Santiago Mint and one 8 Reales of the Zacatecas Mint.

14. Burzio, Humberto: *La Ceca de la Villa Imperial de Potosí y la Moneda Colonial*. Buenos Aires 1945, p. 179.

Due to the introduction into China of many forged 8 Reales by British traders from the end of the eighteenth century, the Chinese applied chops to most coins which they had examined and which they found being of good silver - a practice which continued till the end of the 19th century.

15. Calbeto de Grau, Gabriel: *Compendium VIII Reales*. Puerto Rico 1970, Tomo II, p. 700.

The author describes and illustrates as Nr. 1827-1828 two 8 Reales coins with Chinese chops.

16. Casa de la Moneda de Mexico: *Casa de la Moneda de Mexico - Presencia en el Mundo 1535 - 1990*. Mexico 1990, pp. 129-130.

Some general remarks on chops and illustrations of Mexican chopped coins.

17. Chalmers, Robert: *A history of currency in the British Colonies*. London 1892.

p. 378: "The word 'chop' comes from the Hindi chhap, a seal-impression, and can be traced back to European languages as far as 1537, when a Portuguese treaty states that a Nizam 'sealed' an agreement with his 'chop' ('e o chapo de sua chapa'). The origin of the 'pidgin-English' name chop-house for Customs-station is explained by John Fryer in his *New Account of East India and Persia* (London, 1698) as follows: 'The Custom-house has a great Front where the chief customer appears at certain hours to chop, that is to mark, goods outward bound'.

The practice appears to be peculiar to the province of Canton, and to be unknown in the north. Native Chinese merchants stamp or sign ('chop') every coin as it comes into their possession. No Chinaman will take back a dollar on which his stamp cannot be pointed out, though by the multitude of successive stamps a chopped dollar not only loses its 'ring', but gradually becomes so obliterated that any individual stamp cannot be distinguished in one case out of a hundred. The state of a dollar long in circulation in Hong Kong is deplorable, but it seems impossible to overcome the Cantonese practice. On the contrary, 'chopping' has been legally recognized in Hong Kong by the Governor's Proclamation, published in the *Gazette* of 21st October 1865, under the local ordinance No. 10 of that year" (quoted according to Brunk, Gregory, G: *Merchant Countermarks on World Coins*; see above)

18. Cribb, Joe: *Money in the Bank*. An Illustrated Introduction to the Money Collection of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. Spink & Son Ltd. London 1987, p. 122-124.

Contains some remarks on the origin and the use of the word "chop". Mentioned is the discovery in 1972 in Nanan (Fukien Province) of a hoard of Mexican cobs dated from 1640 to 1700, some of which had been stamped by Chinese traders. In 19th century Hong Kong the high proportion of chopped dollars in circulation made banknotes more popular than dollars.

For a review of this book, see: Hebert, H. J. in *Numismatics International Bulletin*, Vol. 25, Nr. 1, Dallas, January 1990, p. 21.

19. Cunietti-Ferrando, Arnaldo J.: 'Algunos Antecedentes sobre el Origen de los Resellos Chinos en Monedas Hispanoamericanas'. *Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas*, Tomo XI, Nr. 40, Buenos Aires April 1984, p. 1-8.

The author gives a survey of the most important publications on chops quoting from works by Frey, Medina, Pradeau, Bordeaux. He also discusses the possibility that 8 Reales coins may have been chopped by Chinese merchants who lived in the Philippines. Spanish-American coins bearing Chinese chops were counterstamped in the Philippines with "F7°" (Fernando VII) and "Y II" (Isabela II). Cunietti quotes from a decree for the Philippines dating from 1845 which allowed the circulation of Spanish American coins bearing Chinese chops - provided that the bust of the Spanish monarch and the Spanish coat of arms were still visible (see next entry for the full text of this decree).

20. Dasi, Tomas: *Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho*. Valencia 1950. Tomo IV, p. 246-247 and 269 and CXLVII-CLVII. Tomo V, p. VIII-IX, XIV-XVII and XXV.

Various decrees published in the Philippines and dealing with the circulation of chopped Spanish American coins in these islands are published. They do not mention, however, that chopping was practised in the Philippines. In Vol. IV, p. 269, an 8 reales coin with large size Chinese chops and the countermark "F 7°" is illustrated as Nr. 1463.

The following decree is of particular interest and is rendered here in full:

"Hago saber: Que enterado de que en los mercados de China circulan gran cantidad de nuestra moneda de plata sencilla y con particularidad pesetas columnarias de a dos reales y de que los negociantes, así nacionales como de las diversas potencias que salen de aquellos puertos para el de esta capital, se retraen de recibir allí, ni de conducir aquí, dicha clase de moneda a causa de que no está admitida a circulación por la infinidad de marcas con que los chinos la desfiguran, vengo en resolver: Que las monedas de a cuatro, de a dos, de a real y de medio real, se admitan a circulación en esta Plaza, aunque tengan marcas chónicas, con tal que se conozca en ellas distintamente el busto de Su Majestad y las armas de España, y no estén agujeradas, ni rajadas por la circunferencia.

Y para que llegue a noticia de todos y nadie se oponga por alegar ignorancia a recibir la expresada moneda con marcas chónicas, he mandado publicar el presente bando y que se fije en los parajes de costumbre. Dado en el Real Palacio de Manila a 13 de Septiembre de 1845."

Translation: "I make known: after having been informed that in the markets of China big numbers of our fractional silver coinage, particularly pillar pieces of two reales are circulating and that both national merchants as well as those of foreign powers which leave those ports to travel to ours, refuse to accept this type of coins over there and to bring them over here because they are not accepted for circulation due to the huge number of marks with which the Chinese disfigure them, I decided: That the coins of four, two, one and half real are accepted for circulation in this place, although they bear Chinese marks, as long as one can recognize distinctly his Majesty's bust and the Spanish coat of arms on them and provided that they are neither holed nor clipped at the circumference.

And in order that it may be known by all and nobody opposes himself to receive the above mentioned money with Chinese marks, alleging ignorance, I ordered to publish this

decree and to post it at the usual places. Given in the Royal Palace of Manila on September 13th 1845."

It should be noted that Spanish-American two reales coins and those of lower denominations with Chinese chops are nowadays extremely rare and that the use and chopping of fractional Spanish-American coinage in China is hardly ever referred to in other 19th century documents.

21. Deana Salmerón, Antonio: 'La Moneda Mexicana con Marcas y Resellos del Lejano Oriente.' *El Grenadino*. Boletín de la Asociación Numismática Granadina, Nr. 12, April 1995, pp. 9-14.

The author gives a brief historical survey of the use of Spanish American coins exported to the Philippines and used for payment of imports from China in which country they received chops from Chinese money changers in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nankin, Canton and other cities of China. Chopped pieces are worth collecting as variants and as a testimony of their long journey around the world. A "columnario" (pillar dollar) of the Mexico Mint, essayer "MM", dated 1758 and bearing Chinese chops is illustrated. No sources are given.

22. Doty, Richard G: *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Numismatics*. London 1982, p. 51-52 (article "chop mark").

The following definition of "chop mark" is given: "A small punched indentation on a coin, applied by a Far Eastern banker to guarantee its weight and purity."

23. *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*. (Hijos de J. Espasa, Editores), Tomo XXXVI, Barcelona, n.d., p. 115 ("moneda contraseñada")

"Actualmente los negociantes chinos contraseñan los pesos mejicanos que tienen curso legal en los puertos de Singapore, Hong-kong etc." ("At the present time Chinese merchants countermark Mexican Pesos which are legal tender in the ports of Singapore, Hong Kong etc.")

24. Fay, Peter Ward: *The Opium War 1840-1842*. The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 1975, p. 36.

It is reported that Spanish dollars were not chopped by the Chinese "shroffs" who thought these well enough. "Only coins of other origin were chopped after examination. The rest were examined and stamped by the shroffs, each using his own distinctive mark - were stamped and stamped again, until at last they broke into pieces and could only be weighed."

The author does not give a source for his partly erroneous statements.

25. Fengler, Heinz, Gierow, Gerhard and Unger, Willy: *Lexikon der Numismatik*. Third edition. Transpress, Berlin 1982 (1st edition 1976), p. 72.

Contains a short article "Chopped-Dollar" and an illustration of a Mexican eight reales of Charles III, dated 1783 (F.F.) with Chinese chops.

26. Frey, Albert: *Dictionary of numismatic terms*. New York 1917 (article: "chopped dollars").

The author writes that chop means seal or stamp, officially used. As an early source he quotes Ovington (A voyage to Suratt, 1696) who affirms that in India the earlier form "chhap" referred to seals, normally engraved with names and used to stamp merchandise.

27. Fontecilla Larrain, Arturo: 'Monedas hispano-americanas con marcas o resellos chinos.' *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía*, Nr. 108, Santiago de Chile, July-December 1946, p. 311-314.

Republished in: *Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas*, Vol. XIX, Nr. 84, Buenos Aires, October 1992, pp. 51-53.

According to the author, Spanish-American 8 Reales were not only forged in England, but also in U.S.A. (in Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York). These pieces reached Caribbean islands and the north coast of South America and also Mexico. From Mexico's Pacific coast they were taken by Chinese merchant ships. The Chinese had them examined in Hong Kong and Shanghai and took the forged pieces back to America where they exchanged them for coffee and cocoa.

28. Fosalba, Rafael J.: *Estudios Histórico-Numismáticos*. Trascendencia económica y política de las acuñaciones obsidionales y de emergencia durante la revolución por la independencia de Venezuela y Colombia. Caracas 1944, p. 25-31.

Discusses the forgeries of Spanish-American coins which were produced in USA and quotes a letter sent by the director of the Central Mint of USA to the congress denouncing these forgeries. Before the Chinese fully realized that many of the Spanish American 8 Reales were forged, about one third of the silver imported as coins was made up by these forgeries. Thereafter the Chinese tried to accept only genuine coins which they chopped and thus made them suitable for circulation in China, while the forged coins were indirectly sent back to ports of the North coast of South America from where they often reached Antillean islands by means of trade. Between 1921 and 1926 Fosalba obtained one of these North American forgeries from the collection of the mint in Lima: it was a coin struck in copper, dated 1805 which had not yet received its silver plating and was better struck than the original, which made earlier numismatists like Medina and Herrera believe that copper coins like the one mentioned were patterns or experimental pieces.

29. Gabrisch, Karl and Bertsch, Wolfgang: 'Chopmarks on Sichuan Rupees and other Coins from Tibet.' *Numismatics International Bulletin*, Vol. 26, Nr. 3, Dallas, March 1991, p. 57-65.

The authors describe and illustrate several chops encountered on Sichuan Rupees which were struck as from 1903 in western China for the trade with Tibet. Chops in Chinese, Tibetan and Western script, found on both Sichuan Rupees and Tibetan coins are illustrated along with a Yuan Shikai Dollar bearing a Tibetan chop.

For the following reasons I now believe that most of the marks found on Sichuan rupees have to be considered as counterstamps - although only semi-official and are not chops: 1. They were applied on coins which were minted between 1903 and the 1930s when chopping was no more general practice in China; 2. Most of the Sichuan rupees known with marks have a very low silver content; 3. The number of different marks which are known is very limited and on most rupees only one mark can be found, the maximum number of marks on one coin being only three.

30. Gallegos Ortiz, Emilio: *El Monetario Español y su Influencia en la Numismática de las Colonias Hispanas en America. 1500 a 1825*. Guayaquil, Ecuador 1966, p. 43.

The author believes that there are many forgeries among the countermarks from China, Hongkong and the Philippines.

31. González Fuentes, Manuela: 'Sobre los Chop Marks o Contramarcas Chinas.' *Numiscuba* (Museo Numismático, Banco Nacional de Cuba), Nr. 11, Havana, January-April 1989, p. 32-33.

The author reports that the British established a mint in Canton at the end of the eighteenth century in order to strike forged pieces of eight dated 1778. By 1790 several millions of forged coins were circulating in China. Therefore Chinese bankers and officials of exchange offices contracted experts who examined all coins as to weight and alloy and stamped one or more marks on the genuine ones.

Mrs González stated in a letter (dated La Habana, 29th May 1994) to the compiler that her source is: Muñoz; Miguel L.: *Antología Numismática Mexicana*. Mexico D.F 1977

32. Hamilton, Peter F.: 'Chop Marks Brand Chinese Coins.' *World Coins Magazine*, Vol. 7, Nr. 84, December 1970, p. 1512-1518.

According to the author mainly Spanish Colonial coins and those of Republican Mexico were chopped by the Chinese to show that they were genuine and could be used as legal tender for financial transactions. The author illustrates two chopped coins and explains all the Chinese characters occurring on them. Most of these could be classified as personal marks of identity.

33. Herrera Chiesanova, Adolfo: *El Duro*. Estudio de los Reales de a Ocho Españoles y de las Monedas de igual o aproximado valor labradas en los Dominios de la Corona de España. Tomo I y II, Madrid 1914.

A reprint in one volume, edited and augmented by Juan R. Cayon was published in 1992 (Madrid).

In Vol. I, p. 128-130, under the heading "Contramarcas con caracteres chinos", Herrera gives a summary of the article by P. Bordeaux (see above) and presumes that the Spanish Government should own documents about the forging of Spanish American coins in England. However Herrera was unable to trace any of these documents. In Vol. II, plate XI, Herrera illustrates an Eight Reales coin, dated 1899 with several Chinese chops.

34. Jones, Everet and Belschner, Paul E. (editors): *Chopmark News*. Volume 1 - 4, Published from 1991 to 1994. Vol. 3 and 4 was edited by Mark Benvenuto.

Vol. 2 contains a countrywise list "Chopmarked Coins A through C" where coins from various sources, including auction catalogues, are described. Volumes 3 and 4 publish letters of club members, most of which contain descriptions of chops found on coins in their collection. Articles and extracts from publications related to chops are also reproduced along with bibliographical material. No further numbers of this publication seem to have appeared after 1994.

35. Junge, Ewald: *The Seaby Coin Encyclopaedia*. London 1984 (2nd edition 1992).

The Indian origin of the word "chop" is explained. Apart from Chinese characters, symbols (e.g. a rosette) might have been used by larger Chinese trading houses.

36. Kann, Eduard: *The Currencies of China*. Shanghai 1926. Reprint: Sanford J. Durst, New York 1978.

According to Kann, Chinese imitations of the Carolus Dollar caused the practice of the chopping of their genuine counterparts, first towards the close of the 18th century in Canton. Chopped dollars are still in circulation at Foochow, Amoy and Swatow.

37. Kleeberg, John M.: 'The Silver Dollar as an Element of International Trade: A study in failure.' *American Silver Dollars* (Coinage of the Americas Conference at the ANS, New York, October 30, 1993), American Numismatic Society, New York 1995.

On p. 87 et passim chops are mentioned.

38. Kroha; Tyll: *Lexikon der Numismatik*. Berthelsmann Lexikon Verlag, Gütersloh 1977. p. 98.

Article "chop-marks": "Nicht nur ausländische dollargroße Münzen - vorwiegend mexikanische Pesos und amerikanische Trade- (Handels-) Dollars - wurden so gezeichnet, sondern auch die frühen chinesischen und japanischen Handelssilbermünzen und Silberbarren. (Translation: "Not only foreign dollar size coins - mainly Mexican Pesos and American Trade Dollars - were chopped, but also the early Chinese and Japanese silver trade coins and ingots.")

On p. 99 a chopped "Old Man Dollar" from Taiwan is illustrated.

38a. Kruger, J.: 'Die Verbreitung des Mexikanischen 8-Reales Stückes in China.' *Numismatische Hefte* (DDR), Nr. 36 (1987).

39. Legarda de, Angelita G. and Bantug, José P.: *Monetario de las Islas Filipinas*. Banco Central de Filipinas. Manila 1979.

Repeats what had been written on chops by Aldo P. Basso (see above).

40. Leonard, R.A.: 'Chopmarks on Chinese Coins.' *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine*, Vol. 28, Nr. 7, July 1962, p. 1876-1877.

Chinese bankers or money changers chopped silver coins for three reasons: 1. to show that the dollar was provided by them; 2. to certify that the silver contents were standard; 3. to agree that they would accept that dollar without arguing when it was returned to them. The chop was usually one Chinese character or some secret mark which was only known to the one who applied it to the coin.

41. McNabb, Larry D.: '“Chopped” Trade Dollars: Orphans of Numismatics.' *The Numismatist*, May 1996. pp. 550 - 554.

pp. 552: "Many Chinese would signify acceptance of a Trade dollar (or any foreign currency) by counterstamping it. This mark was the merchant's or bank's testimony of a coin's worth, and came to be known as a "chop". The word "chop" was not Chinese, but actually was derived from the Indian word chappa, a seal or official stamp (often in wax) used on documents." (...)

"Chinese chopmarks were documented as early as 1776 by merchants of the East India Company. Chopping coins is thought to have become a general practice in Canton between 1780 and 1790."

"In the port of Hong Kong, chopping a coin was formalized by government proclamation. In 1865 the

governor of Hong Kong issued a formal proclamation (Local Ordinance 10 of October 21, 1865) specifically legalizing and providing guidelines for affixing chopmarks."

p. 553 "Many Chinese chopmarks on U.S. Trade dollars can be attributed to general port areas."

On p. 553 the author gives a table listing 6 chops, four of which can be attributed to certain Chinese provinces.

42. Marotta, Oscar and Morucci, Miguel A.: *Catálogo de Monedas de Plata Columnarias y de Busto. Ceca de Potosí 1767 a 1825*. Buenos Aires 1995, p. 111.

It is mentioned that the British established a mint in Canton at the end of the XVIIIth century in order to forge 8 Reales with the portrait of Carlos III and dated 1778. As a result, the Chinese market was flooded with these forgeries and Chinese bankers employed experts who after checking the weight and the alloy of dollars, stamped these with one or more marks or Chinese characters. A 8 Reales coin of Charles IV, dated 1797 of the Potosi mint and bearing small Chinese chops, is illustrated.

43. Medina, José Toribio: *Las Monedas Obsidionales Hispano-Americanas*. Imprenta Elzeviriana. Santiago de Chile 1919, p. 223.

A modern reprint of this work was published in 1984.

Medina makes some general remarks on the chopping of Spanish-American coins in China and Japan after falsifications of these coins had been introduced by the British.

44. Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda: *Carlos III y la Casa de la Moneda*. Museo de la Casa de la Moneda. Madrid, december 1988 - february 1989, p. 71.

Mentions the chopping of Mexican colonial coins in China. These had been exported legally or illegally to China via the Philippines.

45. Morrison, J. R.: *Chinese Commercial Guide*, Canton 1834. (or 1848?)

"Spanish and South American dollars are however employed as a commercial medium in the maritime provinces; but, the system of stamping them, practised by bankers, shroffs, and merchants, as a pledge for their purity, soon takes from them one of the chief advantages of coined money, that of having fixed and certain weight." (quoted according to Joe Cribb, *Money in the Bank* - see above).

46. Morse, Hosea Ballou.: 'Currency in China.' *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society for the Year 1907*, Vol. XXXVIII. Shanghai, Hongkong, Yokohama and Singapore, pp. 1-60.

After reporting that foreign dollars are not chopped in Shanghai, Morse writes on p. 54: "In the south the quicker-witted Cantonese and Fukienese have accepted the foreign coin, but have done so in a peculiarly Chinese manner. A coin is an officially guaranteed weight of a certain metal; the Chinese accept that for what it is worth, but the first banker or merchant into whose hands the foreign coin comes 'chops' it with an impressed ideogram about an eighth of an inch square, thereby giving the tradesman and the private individual his certificate of *bona fides* of the guaranteeing Government. This is repeated by each succeeding banker, until in the end the chopped dollar resembles a disc, or rather a cup, of hammered silver work."

47. Morse, Hosea Ballou: *The Chronicles of the East India Company 1635-1834*. Clarendon Press. Oxford 1926.

Vol. II, page 324. "There is, for the first time in the records, evidence, that the practice of 'chopping' dollars was already universal at Canton. In sending to Amboyna a sum of forty thousand dollars in specie, it is noted that we apprehend difficulty in procuring even this sum at Macao of Dollars that have not been chopped or otherwise mutilated, which alone are said to be current at Eastern Islands." (the author refers to the year 1799).

Vol. III, p. 101: "Sycee is applied in the records to silver 100 fine, and is usually termed pure silver; but the term seems in this season to be applied to different degrees of fineness; or, in the alternative, dollars are quoted at fluctuating rates in the market. Moreover new (i.e. unchopped) dollars command a premium of 4 per mille over chopped dollars..." (the author refers to the year 1809).

Vol. III, p. 374: "Unchopped dollars were not ordinarily available, but when they were, they command a premium of 4 per mille" (the author refers to the year 1820).

48. O' Meara J. J. (editorial director) et al.: *British Parliamentary Papers*. China Vol. 40, Statistical returns, accounts and other papers respecting the trade between Great Britain and China 1802-88. Irish University Area Studies Series. Irish University Press. Shannon 1972.

p. 729: "Dollars circulate freely in the following provinces: viz., Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Fukhien, Kiangsi, Chekiang, Kiang Su, Ngan-hwui, and in the south and east of Hunan. The circulation of chopped dollars, however, is almost confined to Kwangtung, Fukhien, and Kiangsi; while, singularly enough, the small broken pieces are preferred in many parts of Kwangsi." From: Returns of the Trade of the various Ports of China for the year 1849. Victoria, Hong Kong, April 22, 1850. (signed) A.R. Johnston.

p. 450: "The dollars come into this country from outside: it forms a commodious medium of circulation. Why, therefore, these absurd tricks of detecting a flaw in a coin, when it is neither light in weight nor inferior in touch? And as regards the dollars with numerous chops upon them, of various sizes, they are for the most part stamped in this way by people who at the time of passing them into circulation do so to verify their contents, lest there should be copper or lead mixed up with them; the more are chops upon them, the more, therefore, and the longer they have been in circulation, and nothing more; a greater reason, without the least doubt, for putting faith in them: the chopping of the dollar in no way influencing either the intrinsic touch or weight of silver." From: Proclamation by Yang, Taoutae for the Circuit of Loochowfoo, Lungkiangfoo and Taichangchow, at present Acting Commissioner of Finance for Loochowfoo, and other places in the province of Keangnan. Heenfung, 6th year, 1st moon, 26th day (2 March 1856).

p. 454: "In Fuh-kien and Kwang-tung chopped dollars are much used, and, although greatly defaced and injured, their value is equal to that of sycee. In Che-kiang and Kiang-soo the chopped dollars are not current, but a kind of bright money is preferred." From: Memorial by Lü Tsiuen-sun, Governor of Fukhien. Extracted from the Peking Gazette, of 7th November 1855.

More references on chopped dollars are to be found in this collection of documents.

49. Oliveira Cesar, Eduardo de: 'Los curiosos resellos Chinos en Monedas Hispanoamericanas.' *Cuadernos de Numismática y Ciencias Históricas*, Tomo X, Nr. 35, Buenos Aires, April 1983, p. 3-9.

The author believes that many countermarked Spanish-American coins are of Philippine origin since many of them show as well the Philippine counterstamp consisting in the Spanish crown and F 7° (Fernando VII) or Y.II (Isabela II). Also recently a hoard of about 2000 chopped Spanish-American coins was found in the Philippines. Evidence taken from actual coins shows that the practice of countermarking lasted from about 1750 to 1890. Fractional coins (4 and 2 Reales) are very rare with Chinese chops. The author illustrates 8 coins with chops, five of these also bearing Philippine counterstamps. Also a table, explaining some of the more common Chinese chops, is given.

50. Oliveira Cesar, Eduardo de: *Contramarcas Chinas en las Monedas Coloniales de Hispano America. Siglos XVIII-XIX*. Instituto Bonaerense de Numismática y Antigüedades, Buenos Aires 1992.

The author gives a historical introduction to the subject asserting that the use of countermarks started in South Asia already in the XVIIth century and became general practice in China after counterfeit coins from England had been introduced. The Chinese countermarks are divided into various groups and explained in different tables. Oliveira illustrates 48 Spanish Colonial coins from his collection, all bearing chops, including one Republican coin from Mexico, and tries to translate and interpret almost all chops which can be seen on these coins. This is so far the most extensive Spanish language publication on chopped Spanish-American coins.

51. Pérez, Gilbert S.: 'The "Dos Mundos" Pillar Dollars.' *Philippine Numismatic Monographs*, Nr. 1. The Philippine Numismatic and Antiquarian Society. Manila 1948.

"Comparatively few "dos mundos" were countermarked with Chinese characters in China. There was such confidence in the coin that the Chinese money dealers did not think that they needed any further mark of guarantee as to its weight and fineness."

52. Pradeau; Alberto Francisco: *Numismatic History of Mexico*. Los Angeles 1938, p. 80.

"As the merchants of divers nations in their trade with China did not have sufficient cargo for their outward voyage, they carried Spanish-Colonial pieces of eight, which were well accepted in the various treaty ports of China.

In the course of time, numerous counterfeits were detected and the wily Oriental began the stamping of each piece with a Chinese character. These 'chops' or marks were generally incuse; the early ones are small and fine, while the later ones are larger and coarser.

Thus the presence of these marks on the coins, be they Hispano-American pesos, French piastres, American dollars, or coins of nearly every nation, was an assurance to the bearer and

receiver alike, that such pieces had been tested, as to standard and weight, by Celestials worthy of confidence."

The author reports that eight-reales coins were forged in Birmingham, Baltimore, New York City and in China itself.

53. Rhodes, Nickolas G.: 'A Sino-Tibetan Countermark.' *ONS NL* Nr. 53 (1978).

Describes a countermark on a Sichuan rupee. The mark consists of one Tibetan and two Chinese characters. Possible meanings are discussed.

53a. Rose, F.M.: *Chopmarks*. Numismatics International, Dallas 1987.

This is the only English language book on chops found on world coins and is based on the author's collection which may be the largest of its kind. The book is richly illustrated and divided into the following ten chapters: 1. The Historical Background of Chopmarks; 2. What Chopmarks are like; 3. The Question of Rarity among Chopmarks; 4. Chopmarked European Coins; 5.

Chopmarked Coins of Latin America; 6. Chopmarked US. Coins; 7. Chopmarked Coins of Asia and Islands; 8. Chopmarked Coins of China; 9. Identification and Meaning of Chopmarks; 10.

Shroff Marks. Unfortunately Rose's well written book does not include a bibliography.

For a review see: Zander, Randolph: 'Chopmarks, by F. M. Rose,' *Numismatics International Bulletin*, Vol. 22, Nr. 1, Dallas January 1988, p. 19.

54. Sánchez de Arze, Vicente: 'Ensayo de Catalogación de Reales de a Ocho Hispanoamericanos con Resellos Chinos por Años.' *Numisma*, 1963.

Article not seen by the compiler

55. Sanz, Blas: *Siglos de Monedas Españolas*. Reyes Catolicas - Juan Carlos I., Madrid 1988, pp. 96-103.

Explains some of the Imperial marks of the Ching Dynasty, characters for Chinese provinces and others which supposedly are found on Spanish-American 8 Reales coins. A group of Chinese characters which can be attributed to Japan is also given. The obverses of a Mexican Pillar dollar of 1764, of an eight Reales of Carolus III of 1787 and one of Carolus IV of 1790, all bearing Chinese chops, are illustrated.

56. Schrötter, Friedrich Freiherr von: *Wörterbuch der Münzkunde*. Second edition Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin 1970, p. 104.

Explains that the word "chop" is of hindustani origin and means "stamp" or "seal" ("Stempel", "Siegel").

57. Smith, Bruce W.: 'Chopmarks - An Introduction and Some First Hand Accounts.' *The Journal of East Asian Numismatics*. Vol. 2, Nr. 4, Niskayuna, summer 1995 (issue 7), p. 57-62

This article quotes from some Western sources which had not been used by earlier numismatic authors who wrote about Chinese chops.

A hoard of Spanish-American cobs found in Fukien province in the 1970's and believed to be buried around 1700 contained many chopped coins and provides evidence that chopping was most probably practised in China much earlier than is generally assumed. The habit of chopping coins was known in India even earlier and possibly brought to China by Indian merchants who accompanied the British in the China trade. This would explain some chops of geometric design, similar to those which were used in India, which are occasionally found together with Chinese character chops on the same coin. Chopping must have begun in Canton and was carried by Cantonese merchants to other parts of China. In Shanghai and further north, coins

were not punched with a chop, but were marked with ink chops. In the early 20th century merchants of Canton may also have turned to ink chops since chopped (punched) coins had been banned in Hong Kong. However, ink chops were used at least as early as 1846 in Ningpo (southern China) as reported by Frederick E. Forbes ("Five Years in China" published in 1848). Smith did not find any evidence that chopping was done by Chinese anywhere outside of China. The Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs report for 1910 reports that only clean (unchopped) Mexican dollars would circulate in Wenchow (Chekiang), while chopped dollars were sent away.

58. Symons, David: 'A Chop-marked Denarius?' (article reprinted in *Chopmark news*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, January 1994, p. 12-13, originally published in Birmingham in 1990.)

This article discusses a denarius of Quintus Caecilius Metellus (81 B.C) from the collection of the Birmingham City Museum of Art. This coin bears four chops, one of these can be identified as the Chinese character "tien". It is speculated that this coin may have been used as bullion by a European merchant in a transaction with a Chinese in the 18th or 19th century.

59. Te K'un, Cheng: 'A Brief History of Chinese Silver Currency.' American Numismatic Association: *Selections from "The Numismatist"*, Racine, Wis. 1961, pp. 261-268.

In chapter IV "Foreign Coins" the author quotes a passage from Morse (compare entry nr. 46) on the chopping of foreign silver coins in Canton and Fukien without indicating the source.

60. Thierry de Crussol, François: 'Les réaux espagnols et les contremarques chinoises.' *Acta Numismatica*, Nr. 16. Societat Catalana d'estudis Numismàtics. Barcelona 1986.

A hoard of coins discovered in Quanzhou (Canton) in 1971 contained countermarked Spanish-American coins from about 1650 which proves that already at this time Spanish Colonial coins were used in China as such (and not melted down). According to a Chinese source, between 1680 and 1820, 80 million liang (about 3040 metric tons) of silver was imported by China - presumably most of it in the form of coins.

The article also discusses the circulation of Spanish-American coins in Vietnam. Some countermarked Spanish-American coins are illustrated and common chops are explained.

This is one of the very few Western articles on Chinese chops which quotes from several Chinese sources and is therefore a most valuable contribution to this subject.

61. Thierry de Crussol, François: *Les Collections Monétaires*. Monnaies d'Extrême Orient, Vol. I Chine. Administration des Monnaies et Médailles. Paris 1986.

On p. 111-112 some Spanish-American coins with Chinese chops are described. They are illustrated on plates 49 and 50.

62. Twitchell, H.: *The Chinese at Home*. Adapted from the French of Emile Bard by H. Twitchell. George Newnes, Ltd. London n.d., pp. 184-185.

"The business operations carried on in taels are liquidated in two ways: in dollars or in silver ingots. It was not until the sixteenth century that Spanish dollars made their appearance in China, probably through the medium of Spanish merchants established in the Philippines. This coin

has now (the author refers to the beginning of the 20th century) dropped from circulation. The Mexican dollar is the one most used, and at Shanghai no other is known. These dollars are imported from London chiefly, a few being brought from America."

"The natives always examine a dollar before accepting it, but as there are differences of appreciation, some may accept what others will refuse. Bankers in the south of China have formed the habit of stamping every dollar so that they can recognise it, and either accept it at its full value or refuse to do so. This multitude of stamps applied to coins speedily renders them unfit for use. They become so concave that they cannot be piled up, and they are finally returned to the mint to be recoined. In Shanghai they are merely marked with Chinese ink. Here there is an exchange, where the number of taels to the dollar is fixed four times a day. The number has a tendency to rise during the silk and tea harvests, also when, by reason of exportation to the interior, or to Hongkong or Corea, dollars become scarce. Theoretically, one hundred dollars equal 72.6 taels and the Mexican dollar equals 0.9027."

63. Wadi Saba S.: 'El Resello de la Moneda Peruana.' *Numismática*, Nr. 36, Lima November 1985, pp. 37-38.

The article mainly deals with counterstamps on Peruvian coins, but briefly mentions the chopping of Peruvian Colonial and early Republican coins in China.

64. Wagel, Srinivas R.: *Chinese Currency and Banking*. North-China Daily News & Herald Ltd. Shanghai 1915, pp. 50-53 (Chapter "Foreign Dollars").

It is reported that as a consequence of Chinese forgeries and imitations of the Carolus Dollar at the close of the eighteenth century, chopping of genuine dollars was started in Canton. In 1842 one had to pay 113.207 taels in chopped dollars to buy 100 taels of fine silver in South China.