

ORIENTAL**NUMISMATIC****SOCIETY***Secretary General*

Mr. M. R. Broome

Regional Secretaries

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Newsletter Editor

Dr. M. B. Mitchiner

Europe:

Dr. H. J. van der Wiel

UK. and Eire:

Mr. K. W. Wiggins

North America:

Mr. P. D. Hogan

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Members News

Mr. Wiggins (4) has a number of East India Company coins for disposal and a list will be sent on receipt of 'sae'. Mr. de Vries of Steenwijk (Netherlands) is seeking a copy of 'Kann'. Madame A Nègre has been appointed Curator of Islamic Coins in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) in succession to Monsieur R. Curiel. Mr. R. A. G. Carson has been appointed Keeper of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, a position in which he succeeds Mr. K. Jenkins. A new Numismatic Association has been established in Taipei, Taiwan. Details are available from its offices: Taipei Numismatic Association, 2nd. Floor, 70 Chungking South Road, Sec. 1, Taipei. There is also a new Journal to record: The Far East Journal, CPO 712, Tokyo 100-91, Japan. This is an English Language monthly journal for which the annual subscription rate is 15 dollars.

ONS meetings

Two meetings are being held on Saturday the 21st. October. The meeting in London is at St. James' Hall, 6 Gloucester Terrace, London W 2 (by Lancaster Gate Underground Station). It is being arranged by Mr. K. Wiggins and it is anticipated that there will be an auction of members' duplicate coins. The other meeting on the same date will be taking place in Cologne under the auspices of our European Secretary, Dr. van der Wiel of Gouda. The previous meeting held in London at Mr. J. Cribb's residence last July was attended by a number of local members and also two from abroad, Mr. Jan Lingen (Netherlands) who was on holiday in England and Mr. John Deyell (USA) who was commencing a study tour of Europe and Asia.

ONS publications

Information sheet number 19 on Tibetan Mints is now being circulated to members. The Society is grateful to the Royal Numismatic Society for a donation of £61 which has made it possible to produce this paper. A new list of members has been prepared and will be circulated to members shortly. Please advise your regional secretary in case of any errors or omissions. Information sheet number 20 on Mamluk gold sequins should be available soon.

Regional Councils: a preliminary notice*Michael Broome*

For the past eight years the ONS has been run on informal lines by a fairly small number of enthusiastic members. It has become apparent that, if we are not to stagnate, more members must be actively involved in deciding what the Society should do and in organising those activities. A more formal constitution would also enable all members to have greater influence in the running of the Society. It is therefore suggested that a Council should be established during 1979 in each of the four constituent regions and that representatives from these regional councils, together with the other honorary officers (the ONS has no paid officers), should constitute the governing body of the Society.

The responsibilities of the Regional Councils would be: —

1. To promote the aims and objectives of the Society in their region
2. To account annually for the monies paid to the Society in the regions and to contribute therefrom to the general expenses of the Society
3. To appoint representatives to the governing body of the Society

As members of the ONS are widely scattered throughout the world it is likely that Regional Councils would operate mainly by correspondence; regular meetings not being envisaged. The responsibilities of the Governing

Body would be to ensure that the Society maintains its integrity and its viability. This would include the appointment of all honorary officers. It is intended that members of Regional Councils, other than regional secretaries, should be elected (probably for a 3 year term of office): although the initial appointments might be made by the Governing Body.

Further details of these proposals will be circulated in due course. In the meantime it would be appreciated if members would send their comments to Michael Broome.

The Copper Coins of Ladakh

by N. G. Rhodes

The copper coins struck by Ranbir Singh for Ladakh have been published by Valentine, but the issue has never been discussed, nor the varieties described. All the coins have the same basic type with the following inscription on both sides: on the obverse in Urdu and on the reverse in Nagari: -

“Sri Gadadharaji Sahai, Zarb - i - Ladakh, qalam ru Jamun”

“Hail Lord Gadadhara, struck in Ladakh in Empire of Jammu”

Ladakh was conquered by Gulab Singh before 1840, while he was Raja of Jammu, and before he acquired Kashmir in 1846, so it remained attached to Jammu rather than to Kashmir: hence the reason for the legend reading “struck in Ladakh in the Empire of Jammu”.

It is strange that such a copper coin should have been struck for Ladakh, a territory where Tibetan script was used, rather than either of the scripts found on the coin, and where copper was not traditionally accepted as currency. In any case the issue only lasted less than four years and it seems likely that these copper coins circulated more in Kashmir than in Ladakh since specimens are usually found together with Kashmiri coins. Also, I have found no record of 19th. century travellers in Ladakh referring to their use there.

The issue of copper coins seems to have ceased in 1927 Samvat (AD 1870) and in the following year a silver piece was issued to the same weight standard as the old ‘jao’ of Ladakh, and bearing an inscription in Tibetan, hence correcting features which were likely to have made the copper coins unacceptable. For some reason, however, the issue of the silver coins was quickly stopped and no further coins were struck for Ladakh.

So far I have found the following varieties of Ladakh copper coin: -

Type I Obv. Date 1924. No pellets: border -  Rev. Top line begins ‘Gaja ग ज ’: 3rd. line begins ‘bi वि ’



Type II Obv. Date 1924, Pellets in field, beaded border Rev. As type 1: but 3rd. line begins ‘ba व ’



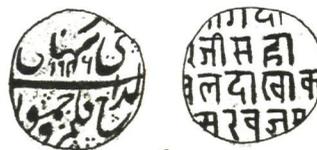
Type III Obv. Date 1924. as type II Rev. Top line begins ‘Gada ग ढ ’ and legend differently arranged with one more letter in top line, one fewer in last line: one letter out of step in between



Type IV Obv. Date 1924. Legend arranged differently with ‘Zarb’ apparently omitted. Plain border Rev. Top line begins ‘Gada ग ढ ’: otherwise as type II



Type V Obv. Date 1926. As type III, but no border visible Rev. As type IV, but lettering larger and not so neat



I also have coins, probably of type V, bearing the dates 1925 and 1927, but it is not possible to see if the reverse legend is arranged as Type III or as Type V.

A Short Note on Toweelahs

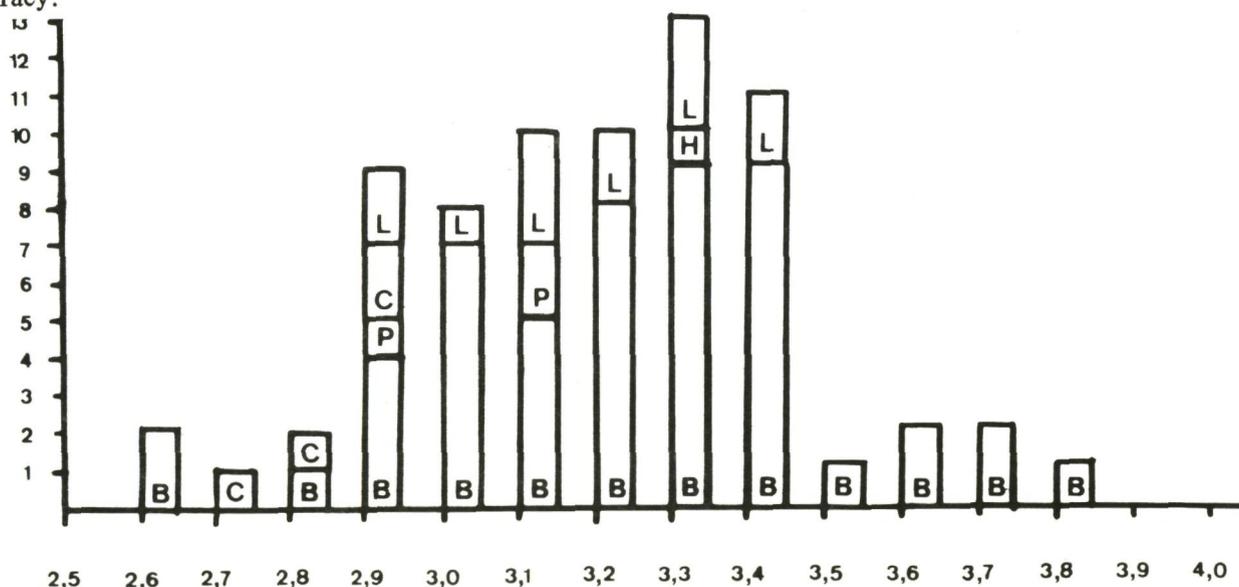
Raf van Laere

During a short stay at Berlin in the beginning of July I was able, thanks to Dr. Simon who is in charge of Oriental coins, to study the Larins of the Munzkabinet (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, DDR). There is a fairly large collection of Toweelahs, some of which are extremely well preserved. Forty nine of the 51 pieces were acquired in 1886 from a Mr. Otto Blas, a medical student who probably brought these coins from a trip to Al-Hofuf (Arabia) where they were still circulating at that time. Curiously enough the British Museum bought in 1887, from the same gentleman, 12 toweelahs (John Walker, *The Arabian Larin*, Islamic Culture 10, 1936, 94 - 96). Thus, we have here a lot of 61 Toweelahs which definitely belong with one another and which circulated in the same period. This observation seemed interesting enough to make an enquiry about their weight in order to discover whether there had been multiples and sub-divisions of the toweelah.

Thanks to Dr. Simon (B) and to Mr. N. Lowick (L), who both took care of weighing the Blas-toweelahs, it was possible to construct the graph shown below. To this was added a group of 3 toweelahs in the Cabinet des Médailles at Paris (P) (Raf van Laere, *Note sur les Larins du Cabinet des Médailles de Paris*, *Revue Numismatique* XVIII, 1976, 142 - 146), the specimen published by Hussain (H) (M.K. Hussain, *Copper Toweelah of Hasa*, *Indian Numismatic Chronicle* VIII, 1970, 41 - 44) and four specimens from a private collection in Belgium (C). The Toweelahs from the As-Sarraf collection in Baghdad (cfr. *Al Maskukat*, the *Journal of Numismatics in Iraq*, II, 1969, 46: 81) were not included since I have some doubts about the exactness of their weights.

The smallest toweelah weighs over a gram less than the heaviest, but when these extremes are left out of consideration one arrives at an average figure of close to 3.2 grammes; as already suggested by Wood (Howland Wood, *The Gompola larin hoard*, *Numismatic notes & monographs* LXI, 1934, 37). The large divergences in weight do not seem to reflect the existence of fractions or multiples of the toweelah since the appearance of all pieces is identical: and, for example the longest (c. 4 cm) is not the heaviest (3.4 gm) and the smallest is not lighter than average. Some of the Berlin toweelahs bear very clear but, until now, unfortunately un-intelligible inscriptions. The traces, however, do not seem to confirm Walker's theory that the toweelahs were struck by means of Ottoman coin dies (John Walker, *op. cit.*, 96). The excellent state of preservation of the coins seems to be incompatible with the fact that they should have been in circulation for more than 150 years: since Walker supposed them to have been struck in the early 18th. century by Sultan Ahmad ibn Muhammad Khan. Further more, the fact that the "letters" on the Berlin toweelahs appear, for the most part, to be in an identical position would seem to indicate the use of special oblong dies. One cannot exclude the possibility of the toweelahs having been coined in the name of the sultan and the characters on one specimen can be interpreted as traces of the word 'Sultan'. In which case the minting of toweelahs should be considered semi-official: the official ruler being mentioned on the local coin. The problem of the minting of the toweelah, its place and date, is, in fact, far from being solved. The notorious traveller of the Arabian Peninsula, Palgrave, who explicitly mentioned toweelah (William Gifford Palgrave, *Narrative of a year's journey through Central and Eastern Arabia* (1862 - 1863), London & Cambridge 1865, vol. 2, pp. 178-179) clearly did not know where these coins were struck.

Toweelahs are not well attested before the second half of the 19th. century, nor outside Al-Hofuf (with the exception published by Hussain: *op. cit.*). If our interpretation of the word 'Sultan' is correct then toweelahs were most probably struck after, or perhaps a little before, the suppression of the Wahhabite insurrection (1819). This, however, must remain pure hypothesis until toweelahs can be dated with more accuracy.



Some recent publications

- H. W. Bailey*, Two Karosthi casket inscriptions from Avaca, *J. Royal Asiatic Soc.*, 1978 no. 1, 3 - 13 (one of these is specifically dated in the "year 63 of the Maharaja Aya deceased", a point of some importance for those interested in eras used by Indo-Scythians.)
- I. C. G. Campbell*, Coin collecting in Mysore, *Numismatics International Bull.* July 1978, 211 - 214
- J. Cribb*, The British East India Company Arkat rupee of Muhammad Shah: a possible candidate? *Seaby's Coin & Medal Bull.*, Aug. 1978, 237 & 240 - 241 (cfr. I. Pickering, *Seaby's C & M Bull.* Oct. 1978, 311)
- J. S. Deyell*, Ahom language coins of Assam, *NI Bull.*, June 1978, 182 - 187 (cfr. N. G. Rhodes, *NI Bull.* Sept 1978, 278 - 279)
- M. B. Mitchiner*, Mint organisation in the Sassanian Empire, *Spink's Numismatic Circular*, Sept. 1978, 419 - 421
- M. B. Mitchiner*, Mint organisation in the Sassanian Empire, (contd.), *SNC*. Oct. 1978, 473 - 475
- R. Plant*, The Urtuqids of Maridin, *Numismatics International Bull.*, Aug. 1978, 242 - 247
- A. Rehman*, An inscription of Jayapala Sahi, *JRAS* 1978 no. 1, 31 - 37
- N. G. Rhodes*, A Tibetan forgery, *SNC*. July-Aug. 1978, 364 - 365
- P. Snartt*, An unusual E. I. C. coin of Sumatra, *SNC* July-Aug. 1978, 361
- P. Snartt*, A curious E. I. C. restrike, *Seaby's Coin & Medal Bull.*, Oct. 1978, 300 - 301
- P. Snartt*, The rarity of East India Company Coins (contd), *Seaby's C & M. Bull.*, Sept. 1978, 270 - 271
- Books*

- M. B. Mitchiner*, *Oriental coins and their values: The Ancient and Classical World*, 12½ by 8½ ins., pp. 760. over 5,500 coins illustrated. Case Bound. £45. Available November from B. A. Seaby Ltd., 11 Margaret Street, London
- H. Simon*, *Sasanidische Munzen*, pp. 23 with 17 coins, 1 silver dish and 1 die illustrated (enlarged), available from Dr. Simon at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Munzkabinett, 102 Berlin, Bodestr. 1-3, DDR.