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ONS Meetings

London: the meeting at St. James' Hall, 6 Gloucester Terrace, London W.2 will be held at 2 pm. on Saturday 20th. October (not the 10th., as cited in the last N/L). It is proposed to hold an auction of member's duplicate coins etc. and it would be helpful if anybody who has items for inclusion in the sale would bring them along on the afternoon, or contact Mr. Wiggins prior to the date. Any items for sale should be enclosed in an envelope marked with the name of the vendor, a brief description of the coins and the reserve price, if any. A commission of 10% will be deducted from the selling price for the benefit of the Society. Any items which can be sold wholly for the funds of the Society would be gratefully received.

New York: Michael Bates and his colleagues at the American Numismatic Society (Broadway at 156th. St., New York 10032) would like to arrange for an informal meeting of ONS members to be held in New York. Please will anyone interested contact him at the ANS (212 - 234 - 3131).

Other News

Occasional Paper 13 by J. Lingen and K. Wiggins on the 'Bundi - Kotah Complicacy' has been circulated to members. Information Sheet 21 by F. Pridmore on 'Copper Doits of Banjarmasin, 1789 - 1817', is about to be circulated. The following Information Sheet is expected to be Part IV of Mr. Tarizzo's 'Early Arab coins of Tunisia - the Hafsid'. The ONS Accounts for 1978-79 are available from the Treasurer (Vic Brown) for the price of a 'S.A.E.' or an 'I.R.' coupon.

Mr. Dauwe (618) of Postbus 61, Terneuzen, Netherlands seeks details of Mamluk falus of Shaban II, Ali, Hajji II, Barquq and Faraj from Alexandria omitted by Balog. Mr. MacKenzie (37) of New Jersey has for sale at 25 dollars (incl. post) a few copies of Serafettin Erel's 'Nadir Birkac Sikke' (1963/73 in one volume). Mr. J.C.F. Gray (97) of , has many coins of

Tranquebar (DOC and DAC) - lead, copper and a few silver - for disposal. He would also welcome correspondence on this series and on the Danish presence in India, in general. Mr. Scott Semans (80) of New Orleans is breaking up a good reference collection of Chinese square-hole cash coins and can provide a list for anyone interested. There will be another auction of Islamic coins at Sotheby's (London) early in October. Dr. P. Bhatia (484) of New Delhi would like to hear from anyone with information that may help towards his preparation of a Numismatic Atlas of Ancient India.

Some forgeries from Bangkok

During the past few months forgeries of silver coins struck by the early Chandra kings of Arakan have been seen both in the United States and in London; the recipients having recently acquired the coins from Bangkok. The coins depict a seated bull on the obverse with the name of the ruler written in Brahmi characters above and they show an ornamented trident on the other side. Genuine silver coins of this series have recently been published by the editor (Mitchiner, *Ancient and Classical World*, pp. 651 - 2, nos. 5185 - 5206). The forgeries differ in several features. The coin flans are of much too even thickness and their circumference too regular. The engraving is shallow and clumsy and the Brahmi legends, which imitate known inscriptions, show many errors in the formation of the characters. All but one of the forgeries seen were die-struck.

Some recent publications

- Bhatia, P.*, a monograph on Indian 'Bull and Horseman' coins (contact Dr. Bhatia or Mr. Webdale for details)
- Broome, M. R.*, An enigmatic "Mamluk" sequin, *Spink's Numismatic Circular*, July-Aug. 1979, 335
- Campbell, I. C. G. and Kutcher, R. R.*, A 53 coin hoard of Indo-Sassanian silver coins, *Numismatics International Bull.*, May 1979, 146 - 148
- Campbell, I. C. G.*, New Turkish Commemorative, *Numismatics International Bull.*, July 1979, 212
- Cruson, D.*, East Asian minting techniques the other tradition, *Numismatics International Bull.*, June 1979, 184 - 194
- Hanscom, D.*, The Indonesian 1954 50 sen, *Numismatics International Bull.*, June 1979, 195 - 196
- Hennequin, G.*, Monnaie ou Monnayage?, En relisant le 'Traite des Monnaies' d' Al - Maqrizi; Hommages a la memoire de Serge Sauneron, II, Cairo 1979, 317 - 328
- Keener, T. W.*, Common Chinese coins deja vu, *Numismatics International Bull.*, June 1979, 174 - 179
- MacDowall, D. W. and Ibrahim, M.*, Pre-Islamic coins in Kandahar Museum, *Afghan Studies*, I, 1978, 67 - 77
(Society for Afghan Studies, c/o British Academy, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1V 0NS)
- McNicoll, A.*, Excavations at Kandahar, 1975, *Afghan Studies*, I, 1978, 41 - 66 (some coins)
- Mitchiner, M. B.*, The British East India Company Arkat Rupee of Muhammad Shah a possible candidate?, *Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin*, Aug. 1979, 248 & 254 - 255
- Mukherjee, B. N.*, Kushana coins of the Land of the Five Rivers, *Indian Museum Calcutta*, mgr. no. 12, 1978, pp 110, 25 dollars
- Sengar, N. S.*, Assaywise list of silver coins in circulation when the British took occupation of India, *N. I. Bull.*, May 1979, 157 - 159

Fractional Tankahs of the Bengal Sultans: Good and Bad

by Scott Semans

Over the course of the last year I have accumulated from a Calcutta source about 62 fractional Tankahs of the Sultans of Bengal: independent rulers of the north-eastern portion of India from AD 1345 until 1537. The full Bengal Tankah, like that of Delhi, is a broad coin that weighed around 10.6 to 10.8 grams during this period. Gold and copper coins of this Sultanate are rare and, until this hoard came up, so were fractional silver coins. None are listed in the 'Calcutta Museum Catalog Vol. II' by H. N. Wright. Donald Hull's 'Collectors Guide to Muhammadan Coins of India' lists weight ranges down to 7.3 grams for Firoz Shah (1486 - 1489) and to 6.2 grams for Husain Shah (1493 - 1518). He illustrates an 18 mm. piece (no. 832) for the latter ruler without giving weight. But these may well represent clipped Tankahs.

The first of the present coins to arrive and the commonest, constituting more than a third of the hoard, were quarter and half Tankahs of Mahmud Shah III (1526 - 1538) struck with special small dies. I was put off - guard by them and did not examine subsequent types as closely as I should have. I recently offered five types for sale. Fortunately two observant customers, both ONS members, were able to point out tell-tale flaws in three of the types before very many were sold. An examination of pieces in stock and in the reference collection shows the following features: -

The false pieces are simply ground down full Tankahs. They have been held vertically against a grinding wheel or belt sander, then hammered to cover scratch marks and produce a more natural-looking edge. Careful examination under a glass will usually reveal scratches running around (not across) the edge. Also, the script running off the edge usually shows bevelling where the coin has been tilted against the wheel either accidentally, or intentionally, to remove metal build-up. On genuine Tankahs and fractionals the run-off script is chopped cleanly with the edge, or shows only a slight rounding due to wear. The bevelled surfaces on false pieces show the same scratches as those characteristic of the edges. One unusually small piece of Nusrat Shah has longitudinal (across the edge) scratches on the bevel, but the usual edgewise scratches on the flat of the rim indicate that the coin was first held flat against the wheel, then finished off horizontally as were the other false pieces.

Most of the weights of the false pieces are within the bounds of probability; though on the low side. The thickness of the ostensible 1/4 Tankahs can be a give-away when they are compared with true pieces. Weights in grams of false specimens are at hand: Ilyas Shah (1342 - 1357) 2.4, 2.78; Sikandar Shah (1357 - 1389) 1.64, 1.89, 1.97, 2.03, 2.08, 2.10, 2.30, 2.32, 2.46, 2.62, 2.63, 2.66, 2.70, 3.87, 4.31, 4.77, 5.00; Azam Shah (1389 - 1396) 4.32; Nasrat Shah (1518 - 1532) 3.28, 5.24; Husain Shah (1493 - 1518) 1.82, 4.88, 5.35, 5.64; Unknown ruler 2.06 gm. Some of Sikandar's Tankahs are very broad and thin and can be deceptive, even when ground down to quarter Tankah size.

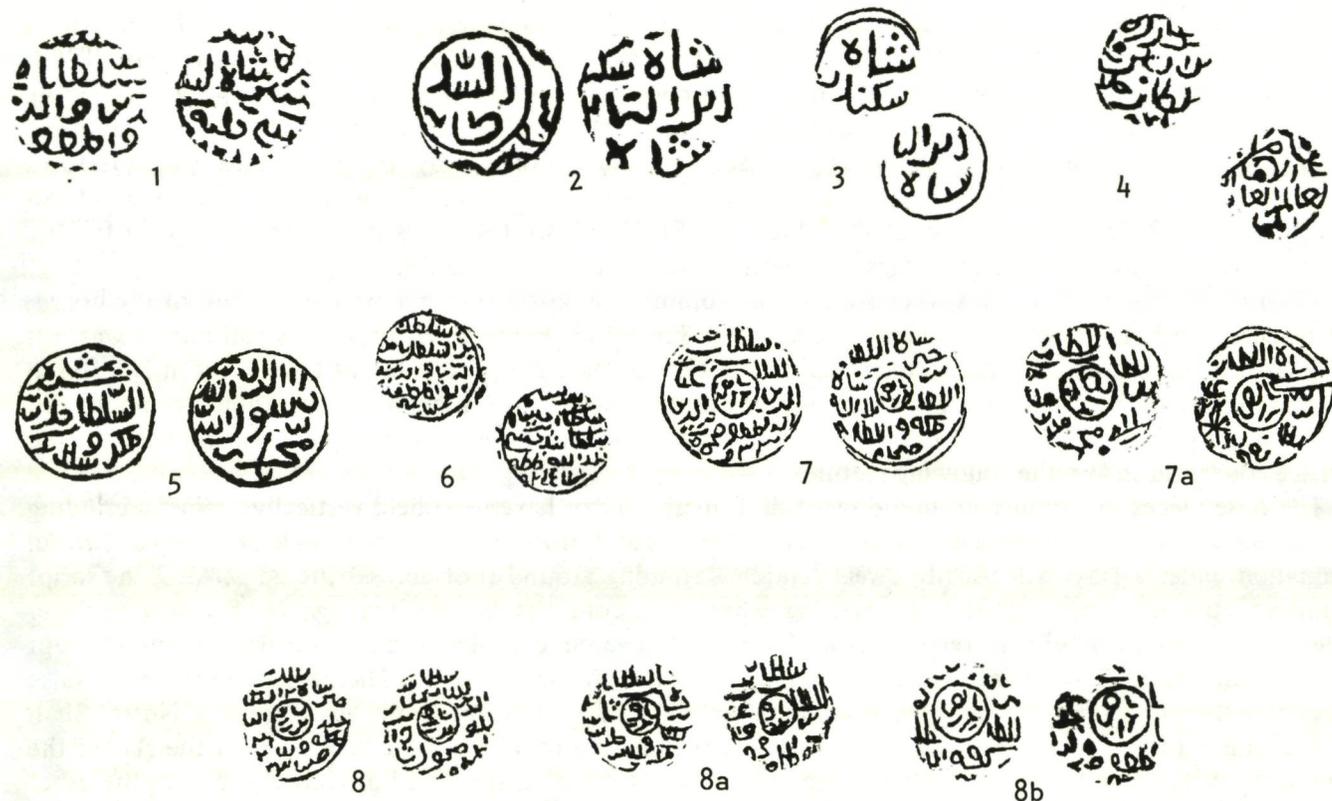
The good specimens, those which exhibit no scratches or bevelling at the edge, all seem to have been struck from special dies of reduced size. The weights are closer to what they should be, and the 1/4 Tankahs in particular are generally too thin to have once been full Tankah pieces. Some specimens have shroff's punch-marks on the edge.

Genuine specimens of fractional and full Tankahs will occasionally show a small area of scratching on the edge where the coin was rubbed on a stone to see the colour of the metal. Also, both genuine fractional pieces and ground down Tankahs will sometimes show a craggy, almost cast - looking, edge that is characteristic of a defective planchet.

Catalogue of genuine fractional pieces in the hoard

- 1 Shams al-Din Ilyas Shah, 1342 - 1357 - 1/2 Tankah, AH 758(?), 5.34 gm
- 2 Sikandar Shah, 1358 - 1389 - 1/2 Tankah, ND., 3 shroff marks on edge
- 3 --, 1/4 Tankah, 2.55 and 2.55 gm.
- 4 --, 1/5 (?) Tankah, ragged edge, 1.95 gm
- 5 Ala al-Din Husain Shah, 1493 - 1518 - 1/2 Tankah, test punches on surface, 5.20 gm
- 6 Nasir al-Din Nasrat Shah, 1518 - 1532 - 1/4 Tankah, AH 925, Husainabad, 3 shroff marks on edge, 2.54 gm
- 7 Ghiyas ud-Din Mahmud Shah III, 1526 - 1538 - as Badah Shahi, AH 933, Fathabad ?, 5.30 gm
- 7a --, variety: cut and 3 shroff marks on surface, 5.16 gm
- 8 --, 1/4 Tankah, 1.98 (split planchet), 2.55, 2.59, 2.63, 2.68, 2.72, 2.73 gm
- 8a --, variety: larger module, 2.66 gm
- 8b --, variety: larger module still, 2.62 gm

Numbers 1 and 5 I consider suspect. Both show scratches characteristic of the altered pieces, but I cannot find, either published or in my own reference collection, a full Tankah type corresponding to either piece, nor any piece with script on such a small module. Assistance on these pieces is sought.



Note on a hoard of Indonesian Plantation Tokens

by Michael Mitchiner

Although tokens issued for use on Indonesian Plantations during the last decade or so of the 19th. century are fairly well known and many have been listed by Scholten (*Coins of the Dutch Overseas Territories, 1601 - 1948, Amsterdam 1953*), actual specimens of such tokens are not commonly encountered. This situation has recently been changed by the appearance of a hoard emanating from Sumatra. The tokens currently being sold in New York and in London appear to come from a single hoard which I am told is being disseminated from a dealer in Singapore. Corrosion is of a type suggesting that the hoard has been buried for some period.

Tokens seen by myself are mostly made of nickel-brass and of copper-nickel. They include a high proportion of dated specimens (1888 - 1891) and come from the following Plantations in northern and central Sumatra: —

Bindjey	Dollar (brass)	1890
Goerach Batoe	Dollar, half dollar, 20 cents, 10 cents (nickel-brass)	1890
Hessa	Dollar (copper-nickel)	1888
Kisaran	Dollar, half dollar (copper-nickel): 20 cents (copper)	1888
Poeloe Radja	Dollar, half dollar, 20 cents (nickel-brass)	1890
Silau (Asahan Tobacco Company) :	Dollar (copper-nickel)	nd.
Soengei Serbangan	Dollar, half dollar (nickel-brass)	1891
Tanah Radja	Dollar, half dollar, 20 cents (nickel-brass)	1890
Tandjong Alam	Dollar (nickel-brass)	1891

The denomination is often followed by the suffix 'Reis' (eg. 1 dollar reis). Most tokens are uniface circular, rectangular or triangular specimens. Those made of nickel-brass are of an alloy that varies in colour from grey (fairly high nickel content) to yellowish (low nickel content). Specimens from Soengei Serbangan and Tandjong Alam do not appear to have been noted previously: the other plantations were cited by Scholten.

A comparable range of tokens recently listed by Scott Semans (New Orleans) may well come from the same hoard. It may, or may not be, coincidence that a further lot of similar plantation tokens appears in the current Schulman sale catalogue (Jacques Schulman B. V., Amsterdam: Sept. 25 - 28, 1979, lots 2066 to 2116 incl.). The Schulman specimens include all Plantations listed above plus a number of others, a few of which were not known to Scholten.