

ORIENTAL**NUMISMATIC****SOCIETY**

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Members news

Dr. ... has a number of books on Indian, Islamic and Turkish coins for disposal. Please contact him for details. ...are planning to auction coins belonging to a wide variety of Oriental series, including Dr. ... Moghul collection. Dr. ... is concerned with the American Association for Asian Studies Numismatics panel at Miami University and a recent seminar was held.

Dr. Wicks (Department of Art, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056, USA) has been invited to contribute a survey of research in the field of Southeast Asian numismatics covering the period 1978 - 1984 for the 10th International Numismatic Congress to be held in 1986. Notices of coin publications for that period, and any important references omitted from the 1972 - 1977 survey, would be appreciated. Dr. Oddy (Dept. of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London) will be compiling a similar survey concerned with the use of scientific techniques in numismatics, and would also welcome details of publications.

In the field of ONS publications, Mr. Cribb's OP on Chinese scripts has now been circulated. In May the last part of the Sikh IS will be distributed and in July a revised List of Members.

In the present newsletter there are a number of short numismatic notes about items that members find interesting, for one reason or another. This is a regular feature that is often difficult to maintain due to the lack of participation by the majority of our membership. Long articles are better published elsewhere. What we seek for the NL are short and accurate comments about half a page in length. Many members should be in a position to communicate something interesting to their colleagues: — please come forward.

The next London meeting of the ONS will be on Sat. 14th July, 2.30 pm, at 28 Little Russell Street.

Any ideas?

Mr. ... has sent drawings of four small copper coins that some one may be able to help identify. They were reported to have been found in Arabia, but look more like South Indian pieces. The drawings are twice natural size:



1

Size (mm.) 7.5 x 6.5

Weight (gm.) 0.275



2

Size (mm.) 6.5 x 6.5

Weight (gm.) 0.210



3

Size (mm.) 6.3 x 5.8

Weight (gm.) 0.162



4

Size (mm.) 6.0 x 4.0

Weight (gm.) 0.097

Non-destructive analysis of a toweelah

by R. van Laere

Preparing a larger project of non-destructive analysis of coins I had the opportunity to have a toweelah examined. 'Toweelahs' are often considered to be degenerate copper larins (see also ONS newsletter 56, October 1978). In his study of the Gompola larin hoard (ANS Numismatic Notes and Monographs 61, p. 16) Wood stressed the fact that, in reality, toweelahs are made of extremely base metal. He did not, however, give any further specifications on the nature of the alloy.

Both the number of toweelahs I has analysed – only one specimen – and the method that was used, do not allow us to generalise the results. The analysis was made in the Technological Research Centre by Mr. R. Wouters from the team of Prof. L. Stals of the University of Diepenbeek (L. U. C., Universitaire Campus, B-3610 Diepenbeek, Belgium). A scanning electron-microscope (Tracor) giving semi-quantitative results was employed.

The results of this method have to be used cautiously since only very small parts of the coin surface are analysed. To avoid non-uniform alloys giving distorted results one has to analyse several spots of each coin and also make sure that the surface of the coin has not been altered by selective natural or artificial corrosion.

According to the analysis the 'Toweelah' that was studied was made of 88.9 % copper, 9.8 % silver and 1.3 % iron, mixed with some other trace elements. It is hoped that in the near future further analyses will be performed in order to corroborate the results.

An early reference to larin money in the Maldive Islands

by M. Robinson

In ONS Occasional Paper 15 "The larin: trade money of the Arabian Gulf" (Nov. 1980) by R. van Laere, it was stated that larins were probably first minted in the Maldive Islands by Muhammad Imad-ad-din I (1620 - 1648 AD). I recently came across the following account in vol. 2 (p. 1666) of the 1625 edition of Samuel Purchas "His Pilgrimage". It proves that larins were in use there by 1602. Although Laval's account has been referred to occasionally by other authors, such as R. C. Temple (Indian Antiquary vol. 57, 1928) and U San Tha Aung ('Arakanese coins' 1979), it may not be well known and is, in any case, a very detailed description of larin money.

Francois Pyrard de Laval was shipwrecked on the Maldives on his way to the East Indies, and stayed there from July 1602 until February 1607. Purchas translated his story from the French and the section dealing with "Coyne" (coin) is given below in modern English.

'The money of the Kingdom is only silver, and of one kind. These are pieces of silver which they call Larins, of the value of eight sols or thereabouts of our money, long as a finger, but much folded. The king coins them in his island, and imprints on them his name in Arabic letters. The other moneys are exotic coins, and these go current, but they take them not but at just value, and at equal weights, and only the gold or silver, all other sorts of coin which are not of the country they reject. For in India, as there are many Realms and Signories, so great diversity of money, of stamp and character, not only of gold and silver, but also of another metal called Calin, which is white like tin and very hard, pure and beautiful, whereof they make great esteem in the Indies; they also have iron money. But this kind of money goeth only in the Dominions of the Prince that coins it. The gold and silver of whatsoever stamp and character it be, is current through all the Kingdoms according to its just value, which is of different value from ours, because silver is dearer than here and gold baser. The King makes no lesser coins than the Larin; so that to effect their merchandise they cut the silver and give in weight according to the value of the merchandise: which is not without loss, for in cutting of a Larin they lose the twelfth part. They take no piece of silver which they have not weighed, and put in the fire to try the goodness: everyone hath weights in his house for this purpose. Also instead of little and base money they use shells, whereof 12,000 go to the value of a Larin. All their gold and silver come from foreign places, for they have no coin (?mines) in these isles. In all their public markets and particular bargainings, they use to exchange very often one thing for another'.

Two Georgian dirhems struck by David, son of George, at Tiflis in AH 651

by M. B. Mitchiner

From time to time the medieval Christian kings of Georgia belonging to the Baghratid family struck coins in their own names. More commonly the Georgians were subject to more powerful neighbours and local coinage was issued in the names of foreign suzerains, notably from the time of the Mongol occupation during the years around AD 1240. The pair of dirhems published here were struck soon after the Mongol occupation and they bear the names both of the Baghratid king David and of his sovereign, the Mongol Great Khan Mangu. Dirhems of this type have been recorded for the years AH 650, 651, 652 and 654 (AD 1252 - 1256), as discussed by D. M. Lang (p. 39) in his 'Studies in the numismatic history of Georgia in Transcaucasia' (ANS Numismatic Notes and Monographs 130, 1955). But Lang did not have specimens available to publish details of the issue, which appears to be known only from Russian publications.

The two coins share the same obverse die (Mangu legend), but are struck from different reverse dies: -

Obv.	By the power of God,	بقوه خدای	Rev.	David king,	داود ملک
	by the good fortune of the Lord	باقیال بادشاه		son of George,	ابن گيورگ
	of the world, Mangu Qaan	جهان منگو قان		the Baghratid	البغراتی

margin: year one, and fifty and six hundred

margin: struck at Tiflis

سنه احدى و خمسين و ستماية

ضرب تفليس

weights: 2.70 and 2.75 gm.

illustrations natural size.



(obv)



1

(rev)



(obv)



2

(rev)



Sikh: AE 4.80 gm



A Sikh coin with a Jhar

by K. W. Wiggins

Charles J. Rogers in his book 'Coin collecting in Northern India' (Allahabad 1894: p. 125) stated "The Sikhs in some of their predatory excursions went as far as the Duab between the Ganges and the Jumna. It is not astonishing then that there are coins in existence on one side of which is the old Sikh distich and on the other the Najibabad mint name and mark. One coin of this kind is known with the Jaipur mint name and mark, though I do not recollect reading anywhere that the Sikhs ever held that city".

The copper coin illustrated here was found among some miscellaneous Indian coins some time ago. It is a very poorly struck coin in worn condition, but sufficient can be seen on it to make it interesting. One side bears a jhar, very similar in style to that found on the coins of Jaipur. Underneath the jhar are the remnants of a legend, part of which is probably . One is tempted to suggest that the mint name is Jaipur (جھي: پور), but it really  could be anything. The other side (obverse) bears part of one of the Sikh distichs, but insufficient is visible to suggest which one it is.

Rogers goes on to suggest that the Sikh Jaipur coin is an instance of "bragging" on the part of the Sikhs and he cites the existence of a coin struck at Surat with a Sikh couplet and a half rupee of Akbar of the Urdu Zafar Qarin type with the Sikh leaf on the reverse. Whatever these numismatic oddities are, I should not think that the copper coin published here is in the same class. During the latter half of the 18th century Sikh armies were constantly making incursions across the Sutlej river and penetrating as far as Saharanpur, Rohtak, Najibabad and the Hansi area. It is therefore conceivable that they were in occupation of some small town in northern Rajputana for a period long enough to justify the issue of a copper coinage for local use. The jhar symbol is found in one form or another on the coins of Jaipur, Alwar, Karauli and Kishangarh.