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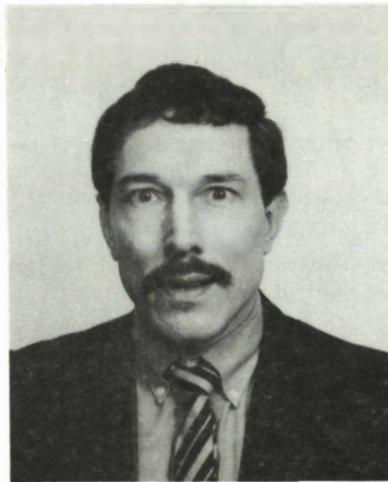
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NEWSLETTER no. 104

January - February 1987.



NICHOLAS M. LOWICK (1940 - 1986)

It is with great sadness that we are writing to inform you of the death of our fellow, friend and colleague Nicholas Lowick. Nicholas died, at the early age of 45, on 11th November 1986 after a short illness. He had worked in the British Museum's Department of Coins and Medals as curator of Oriental Coins since 1962, being awarded a personal Deputy Keepership in 1979 in recognition of his academic standing. He was well known both in Britain and abroad as a leading authority in the field of Islamic coins. His most important publications were on the coins of medieval Iran and India, the Seljuqs, the Yemen, the Persian Gulf and Islamic Sicily. At the time of his death, his catalogue of the coins of the Abbasid Caliphs was nearing completion. Nicholas was generous with his knowledge, freely assisting scholars, enthusiasts and dealers from around the world who came or wrote to the British Museum to seek his advice.

In recent years he had also established for himself a reputation as an epigraphist, and last year published his first full length monograph: SIRAF. THE COINS AND MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS, a work which amply demonstrated his expertise in both numismatics and epigraphy.

Nicholas will also be remembered for his work as an editor, particularly his contributions to the Royal Numismatic Society's Numismatic Chronicle as reviews editor (1973-86) and Coin Hoards as section editor (1975-86). His service to the Royal Numismatic Society also included a lengthy term as its Library Secretary, serving on Council from 1964 to 1981.

To mark their gratitude for the kindness and help Nicholas so freely gave, his friends and colleagues have asked the Royal Numismatic Society to establish a permanent memorial to his life's work. On 18th November, the day of his funeral, the Council of the R.N.S. decided to set up The Nicholas Lowick Memorial Fund for the Promotion of Oriental Numismatic Research. It is envisaged that this Fund will be used to provide finance in the form of grants, subsidies and awards to further the pursuit of the subject to which Nicholas devoted his career.

The Fund will initially be organised by Mr. J. E. Cribb and Mr. N. G. Rhodes, the Secretary and Treasurer of the R.N.S. under the aegis of the Society's official charitable status. Anyone who wishes to contribute to the Fund or have further information is invited to write in confidence to them at the Royal Numismatic Society, c/o Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG (01-636-1555 ext. 585).

Cheques should be made payable to "The Nicholas Lowick Memorial Fund".

J. P. C. Kent
President
Royal Numismatic Society

Nicholas M. Lowick, *Siraf XV, The Coins and Monumental Inscriptions*, The British Institute of Persian Studies, London, 1985. pp vi + 116, pl. XXX. Pb. £17.50 including postage, from ...

The second of 17 planned fascicules describing the results of the excavations at Siraf on the Persian Gulf between 1966 and 1973, this well-produced paperback deals with the coins found in the area, an inscription from the Great Mosque, and the funerary inscriptions. In effect, there are two reports bound in one with no attempt to relate the coins to the inscriptions although the juxtaposition of two completely different traditions of epigraphy is illuminating to the numismatist who is familiar only with the coins.

Lying on the Iranian coast of the Persian Gulf some 220 kilometers south-east of Bushire, Siraf has a long history as a trading centre connecting India with East Africa and the Middle East. It was at its peak around AD 900 but was badly damaged by an earthquake in 977 and went into decline. By AD 1200 the site was completely ruined and deserted.

The first part of the report records 949 coins or fragments, almost half of which were so corroded or worn as to be unrecognisable. The identified specimens range from a silver drachm of Persis, a contemporary of the Parthians, to a group of anonymous coppers dated AH 1288, from the hitherto unrecorded mint of Kangun. There is also a hoard of Chinese cash, all but one of them Northern or Southern Sung and probably deposited in the fourteenth century AD. The largest component of the coins listed comes from the early Caliphate with over 250 specimens from the Umayyad and 'Abbasid periods.

The information provided for each coin is concise but sufficient. They are grouped conventionally by dynasty, ruler, mint and date with the metal stated. Interestingly, all the AE coins that are not of lead or brass, are called 'bronze'. The legend on the Islamic pieces is given in modern Arabic script with any unusual legends translated. All coins have a reference to the location of the find spot and, where known to the author, the diameter and, more rarely, the weight, is given. 119 pieces are illustrated (26 also enlarged to a scale of c.2¼ to 1) and the section is completed by indices of (transliterated) personal names, place names and mints.

Looking in more detail at individual coins, one of the 32 bronze Sasanian pieces has a mint name read as SHYL'C or SHYL'P and tentatively assigned to Siraf. Amongst the 'Abbasid fulus there are four coins of al-Mutawakkil from Fars with the very late date of 247 together with two anonymous coppers with lettering of similar style, presumably of the same period.

An important section of the catalogue covers the lead coins that make up over half the total number. The 54 pieces that are assignable to a definite period are 'Abbasid from the time of al-Rashid, the dated pieces being all of AH 188. 13 coins bear unidentified names but in a similar style to the 'Abbasid types.

They are all fairly large coins, around an inch in diameter, sometimes named as fulus, and the report suggests that they may have been discarded rather than lost, when they were demonetised. It is interesting that lead coins of the Caliphate are found only around the Persian Gulf although there are no lead mines there. It is suggested that the lead was a by-product of the silver mines up on the Iranian plateau.

During the Buyid period, Siraf was at the peak of its prosperity and minted silver dirhams, sometimes confused with those of Shiraz, in some quantity. Curiously, only two are recorded from the excavations that were minted at Siraf, both dated AH 341.

The next 8 or 9 centuries account only for some 90 miscellaneous, mostly bronze, coins from the excavations. Interesting pieces include a dirham of 349 from the rare mint of Huzu and a gold dinar of 542 from Shiraz with the name of the Atabeg Boz Abah, for whom only two other coins were known to the author.

A completely new series is recorded for the Shaikhs of Kangun. They are anonymous bronze pieces with dates ranging from AH 1228 to 1288. David Whitehouse, who directed the excavations, has contributed a short history of Kangun to the report.

Your reviewer is not competent to comment on the Chinese cash except to note that each piece is assigned to a precise AD date. This is presumably on the basis of minor variations in the calligraphy and it would have been helpful to have included a reference to the authority relied on. It may be relevant, however, to recall the comment of the tenth century writer, al-Muqaddasi, that Siraf and Uman were "the forecourt of China". Most of the coins appear to have been on a string and were probably deposited in the fourteenth century as they were found associated with some Ilkhanid coppers of Abu Sa'id.

The section on monumental inscriptions takes up about a third of the report but two thirds of the plates. It includes fragments of an undated inscription from the Great Mosque tentatively assigned to the Buyid period and 62 funerary inscriptions, mostly grave covers. They have been separated into three groups, roughly a century apart, on the basis of shape, style and the occasional dated piece of which there are 13 between AH 364 and 735. It is suggested that they are the work of the 'Siraf' school of stonemasons and artists which was at its peak during the later Buyid period.

The catalogue gives the inscriptions in clear Arabic with a detailed description of the style and the decorations. All are illustrated with in-situ photographs, supplemented on occasion by line drawings, and the dimensions and find spots are recorded. Two other relevant covers from Siraf, in the British Museum and the Louvre respectively, are described in appendices and the section finishes with indices of personal names and Quranic quotations.

Taken individually, the items recorded in this report may not be of the highest importance but the picture painted by the total assembly is of considerable interest to the historian or numismatist studying the activities of the Persian Gulf in the ninth and tenth centuries AD. The degree of knowledge of the subject provided by the author is unparalleled in this field of study and this report, his last major published paper before his untimely death at the early age of 45, is an important contribution to a poorly understood area of Islamic numismatics.

M. R. Broome

ONS News

Occasional Paper no. 21 – a report by Michael Bates on the Islamic workshop held at the 1986 International Numismatic Congress – has been produced and is being distributed with or in advance of this Newsletter.

The annual meeting of the ONS American Region was held on 13 December. Professor Frye was unable to be present as previously planned; instead Stephen Album gave a talk on the Rasulids of the Yemen. A brief note in memory of Nicholas Lowick was provided by Michael Bates.

The next ONS meeting in London will take place on Saturday 7 March 1987, commencing 2.30p.m. at 9 Montague Street. Please note the new venue, which is situated along the east side of the British Museum.

From the Secretary General

In view of the increasing interest in oriental numismatics in the area of the Indian sub-continent, it has been decided to open a South Asian Region on a trial basis. Mr. P. P. Kulkarni of Nagpur has been appointed the first Regional Secretary, and from 1 January 1987 will be responsible for the circulation of the Society's publications, correspondence with members, collection of subscriptions and the general development of the Region. Subscriptions may be paid to him in rupees or to the Society's Treasurer, Mr. Priestley, ..., in sterling. South Asian members paying their subscriptions to Mr. Priestley after 1. 1. 1987 should inform Mr. Kulkarni of this fact. I hope that the facility to pay subscriptions in local currency will enable many more people to join the Society and to take part in its activities. The South Asian Region will encompass India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangla Desh, Sikkim and Sri Lanka.

From the Editor

There are over 500 members of the ONS. Very few of you ever take the trouble to let me know what you think of the Newsletter. This may well mean that you are all happy with it. But it would be nice to know. Why don't you drop me a line with comments and suggestions you may have for topics you would like covered. And don't forget to let me know if any of you publish any article, paper or book on oriental subjects. I can only mention in the Newsletter what I get to hear about. So it's up to you ! One last request; keep the articles coming. I particularly need material on Islamic subjects (non-Indian), Japan, Korea and anything else which rarely finds mention in the Newsletter.

New and recent publications

1. Following his publication during the last decade of three massive tomes on oriental coinages, ONS member Dr. Michael Mitchiner has now turned his attention to medieval pilgrim and secular badges. His new volume (288 pages, 12 x 8 ins./300 x 200 mm) catalogues and illustrates over 1100 badges found in the U.K. The price is £70. Further details from Hawkins Publications, ISBN 0 904173 19 4.
2. Any member interested in the numismatic history of Papua New Guinea will be pleased to note the publication of a book by Dr. W. J. D. Mira entitled "From Cowrie to Kina – the Coinages, Currencies, Badges, Medals, Awards and Decorations of Papua New Guinea." The book, covering the period from the German administration to the present day, has 332 pages, many illustrations and is printed in a limited edition of 1000 hardbound copies. Price A\$80 (plus A\$5 for postage) from Spink & Son (Australia) Pty. Ltd., 53 Martin Place, Sydney, NSW 2000 Australia, or £37.50 (plus £2.50 postage) from Spink & Son Ltd., 5-7 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QS, U.K.
3. "Coinage in Ancient India" by Swami Satya Prakash Saraswati and Rajendra Singh. In two volumes, price Rs 600, available from Indian Books Centre, 40/5, Shakti Nagar, Delhi - 110007, India, this work is described as follows: "First of its kind in India, this well-compiled monograph will be of tremendous value to the student of Indology. In addition to exhaustive accounts of the types of coins issued from the earliest times to about 1200 AD, it also incorporates chemical and metallurgical analysis of the Indian coins, in all their diverse range."
4. Robert Tye has illustrated 13 apparently unpublished types of the "Sri Vira" issues of the Nayaks of Madura on the front of his list 15.
5. Dr. Mitchiner has published an article entitled "The cosmological scene depicted on some early Burmese 'symbolic' coins" in *From East and West* (IsMEO, New Series, Vol. 34, Nos. 1-3, Sept. 1984).
6. ANS Museum Notes no. 31 contains the following items of interest to ONS members:
 - L. Holland – Islamic Bronze Weights from Caesarea Maritima. This is an important survey of the medieval Islamic period weights from a single site in Palestine.
 - J. Kolbas – Mamluke Bronze Weights: an Extinct Species. Ms. Kolbas condemns the only known Egyptian Mamluke bronze weight as a concoction !
 - L. Komaroff – The epigraphy of Timurid coinage. Some preliminary remarks. This is an introductory survey of the inscriptions of this mediaeval central Asian dynasty.
7. *South Asian Archaeology*, 1983, edited by M. Taddei and J. Schotsmans, Naples, 1985, includes the following articles (in addition to one by Joe Cribb on Dating India's Earliest Coins, mentioned in an earlier Newsletter):
 - P. Yule – On the Function of the Prehistoric copper Hoards of the Indian Subcontinent. This paper provides interesting insight into the copper objects which could be the pre-coinage money of South Asia.
 - D. W. MacDowall – The Successors of the Indo-Greeks at Begram. In this paper MacDowall uses the evidence of finds at Begram to illustrate the sequence of coins in Afghanistan during the Indo-Scythian and early Kushan period.
 - J. C. Harle – Herakles Subduing the Horse(s) of Diomedes and Krishna Slaying the Demon Horse Kesin : a Common Iconographic formula. Harle uses numismatic evidence to explain the identity of a deity depicted on a Kushan sealing in the Ashmolean collection, Oxford.
8. IAPN. 35th Anniversary Volume: Numismatics – Witness to History, Maastricht 1986, contains an item by Lutz Ilisch entitled "Die Kupferprägung Nordmesopotamiens unter Harun-ar-Rashid und seinen Söhnen 876 - 842 AD".
9. *Revue Numismatique* 1986 includes two items of potential interest:
 - G. Fussman – Une étape décisive dans l'étude des monnaies kouchanes. This is a review article on Göbl's Kushan coin book and other recent publications.
 - E. Godet – Bilan de recherches récentes en numismatique axoumite. A review article on Hahn & Munro-Hay's books and other recent research.

Members may wish to know that the following publications of the International Numismatic Commission are available from A H Baldwin & Son Ltd,

1. Proceedings of the International Congress of Numismatics, New York - Washington 1973. 683pp, 77 plates, cloth, £70.
2. A survey of numismatic research 1972 - 77. Berne 1979. 526pp. Paper covers. £38.
3. Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of Numismatics, Berne 1979. 1046pp, 122 plates, in two volumes. £80.
4. A survey of numismatic research 1978-84, in two volumes. £80. [Members should note that, apart from the ancient series, the coinage of the Indian sub-continent is poorly covered in this publication.]

Notes on the Sultans of Kashmir. Part 3. by Nicholas Rhodes

3. Ibrahim Shah

Another pair of coins in my own collection that are die-linked are illustrated below:—



fig. 4



fig. 5

Fig. 4 is of Muhammad Shah, while fig. 5 is of Ibrahim Shah. In the list of Sultans given by previous numismatic authors, Muhammad Shah was thought to have died around 1537, while Ibrahim only came to the throne in 1552 – rather a long gap for a die-link to exist. In fact a similar pair of coins was published by Michael Mitchiner¹⁰, but he failed to notice the link and actually managed to read two different dates into the one die: 942 on the Muhammad Shah piece and 961 on the Ibrahim Shah piece – another example of wishful reading !

The solution to the problem can again be found in the pages of Parmu's book, where it is recorded that in 1528 Muhammad Shah was deposed and his son Ibrahim I was installed on the throne for a period of about one year until there was another rebellion and Nazuk Shah became Sultan in 1529. The later Ibrahim II was a different individual, although there is still some confusion as to who he was and when he reigned. Parmu placing his accession date as 1540, says he was the son of Ismail Shah, and that he was deposed when Mirza Haidar Dughlat occupied Kashmir in about November 1540. Bamzai¹¹, on the other hand, makes no mention of an Ibrahim in 1540, but does mention that in 1552, when Daulat Chak took over effective power, he installed an Ibrahim Shah on the throne. Exactly how many Ibrahim Shahs there were, and how often they occupied the throne are questions I cannot answer at present. Similarly, whether any of the coins with the name of Ibrahim should be attributed to 1540 or 1552 remains an open question, but this particular piece illustrated above must surely be attributed to Ibrahim I. In spite of Michael Mitchiner's efforts, I maintain that the date is quite illegible, apart from the numerals on the obverse of the Muhammad Shah piece, which read 842, and merely copy the Zain-ul-Abiden coins again.

10. "The World of Islam", 1977, Nos. 2987 and 2992.

11. P. M. K. Bamzai: "A History of Kashmir", Delhi 1962.

A Moghal Miscellany

1. A half-dirhem of Humayun

Very few half-dirhems of Humayun are known. R. B. Whitehead published one in his paper 'Some Notable Coins of Mughal Emperors, part 1'¹ bearing the unusual expression **سکه مرادی** – sikka muradi – small change. Both the Lahore Museum catalogue² and the Supplementary Catalogue of the Lucknow Museum³ list coins of Qandahar weighing 40-53 grains, though these may be light-weight dirhems, rather than half-dirhems. The coin illustrated here weighs 2.35 grams (36 grains). The obverse bears the Kalima within a lozenge and part of a marginal legend (presumably the usual one). The reverse bears the ruler's name in a circle with a loop at the top and part of the marginal legend.



Obverse

Kalima

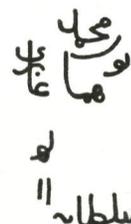
margin: insufficient
to read



Reverse

In circle with loop:

margin:



Mohammed
Humayun
Ghazi

.. Sultanahu ..

The arrangement of Humayun's name and title is worthy of note as it seems to be different from other published coins and coins in the British Museum collection. Does any member have a full dirhem of this type. The mint is not clear but the letters in the margin to the left of Sultanahu may be part of "Lahore". There is no date on the coins. The flan is slightly irregular with a maximum diameter of 18 mm.

1. Numismatic Chronicle, Series V, Vol. III, 1923-4.

2. Catalogue of coins in the Lahore Museum, vol. II: coins of the Mughal Emperors. R. B. Whitehead 1934. Reprinted 1977.

3. Supplementary catalogue of the Mughal coins in the State Museum Lucknow; C. R. Singhal 1965.

2. Akbar: a quarter (or fifth) rupee of Ujjain

Ujjain was an important city in the Malwa Sultanate, conquered by Akbar in the period 968-9 AH. In the years after the conquest, the Moghals struck coins at Ujjain on the Malwa reduced tanka standard of around 7 grams. These round coins were followed by a lengthy series of square rupees dating from the year 987. These coins initially bear AH dates and then Ilahi years. A few round Ilahi rupees are also known.

The coin published here and dated AH 987 was probably struck at the time Akbar reintroduced the rupee standard at Ujjain (Sher Shah Suri had previously struck rupees at this place). At a weight of 2.33 grams, it could be a 1/5 rupee or a light-weight ¼ rupee (the coin is a little worn).



Obverse

الله
البر
۹۸۷
الله
Allah
Akbar



Reverse

اجیت
ص
Zuriba
Ujjain

Actual size 12½ x 13 mm

5. A copper coin of Kam Baksh ?

Gerry Brenning has sent details of a very interesting copper coin in his collection. It was struck at Bijapur in the year AH 1120.

There is no ruler's name on the coin; instead we find the words **دين پناه** – Din panah – refuge of the faith. This is the laqab of Kam Bakhsh and occurs as part of the couplet on his rupees. Moreover as Bijapur, according to Brenning, was striking gold and silver in Kam Bakhsh's name in 1120, it is reasonable to ascribe this coin to that ruler. The laqab of Kam Bakhsh's successor at Bijapur, Shah 'Alam Bahadur I, was Qutb-ud-din, which in any case does not occur on the coinage.



دين پناه
باد فلوس



الظفر
دار
بجپور

This legend has been completed using a similar, albeit lesser quality coin in my own collection. The mint epithet is not complete on either coin but it is assumed to be the same as used on the gold and silver coins of the mint. The Brenning coin weighs 14 grams.

6. Jahandar Shah: a rupee of Allahabad

I am grateful once again to Gerry Brenning for details of this coin. Although Allahabad is a well-known Moghal mint, it seems to be unrecorded for Jahandar Shah. The rupee is dated AH (1124) year one and bears the 'Abu-l Fath' legend. The full couplet is translated as "The victorious Jahandar Shah, Defender of the Faith, struck coin in the horizons like the sun and moon".



Weight 11.7 grams

7. Mohammed Shah: a ½ rupee of Shahjehanabad

Bill Warden Jr. has sent a photograph of a recently acquired ½ rupee of year 10. The AH date is incomplete. Although Shahjehanabad is an extremely common mint for Mohammed Shah, year 10 seems to be an unpublished year for a ½ rupee. The legend is the usual Sahib Qiran couplet. No weight is available.



The Szechuen Military Dollar – A Major Variety ? by Richard Wright

In the immediate period after the Chinese revolution against the Manchus in 1911 some of the provinces, such as the Manchurian Provinces, continued the production of the old 'dragon' coinage; others, of which Szechuen is a good example, switched straight away to a republican design. The Szechuen Military Government produced a set of coins, dated 1st year (1912), of denominations \$1, 50c, 20c, 10c; 50, 20, 10 and 5 cash, with the addition of 100 cash, and 200 cash in a different style, in 1913. In the fullness of time a central republican government would have replaced these coins with national issues, but this unity never really came about and, anyway, in 1916 Szechuen was one of the provinces to proclaim independence after Yuan Shih-kai's attempt to restore the dragon throne. Thus it was that in semi-autonomous, distant Szechuen the production of the military government coinage continued unabated into the 1930s, still dated (mostly) 1912 and without much obvious variety; except that on closer examination it is difficult ever to find two coins from the same die.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Szechuen province entered the republican era with two mints; Chengtu, the main mint which had been set up with American machinery and dies in 1898 and which had been responsible for the 'dragon' coinage, and Chungking, built as a copper mint but not opened until 1913. The military coinage struck by these two mints bears the unusual provincial identifying mark of a rosette in the centre of the reverse (fig.1, A), described by one source as a hibiscus flower. It is of interest that this mark appears on the Kansu 50 cash of 1926, and the Kweichow motor car dollar of 1928, giving perhaps some clue as to the provenance of these two coins. However, it was the writer Cheng Te-k'un¹ who pointed out that there was a way of differentiating between Chungking mint products (mainly copper) and those of Chengtu mint. This was that the Chengtu designed coins had an alternative Chinese character 'Yin' (silver) with a third cross-stroke in place of the more normal two dots (B), and a similar character 'Tung' (copper). As both the Chengtu and the Chungking mints were prolific copper coin producers there are many examples to be found among the cash coins featuring the two 'mint marks'; but as Chungking actually produced only a relatively small amount of silver dollar and half dollar coins, some of which were found to be particularly debased, it is not so simple a matter to compare the silver coins. The writer Kann² records that he had a batch of Szechuen dollars sorted and attributed (but not explained) for him by the Chengtu University Museum, and he tabulates only three varieties of Chungking minted dollars (K.777, K.778 and 778a). It is noticeable that the one illustrated (K.778) does have the Chungking character 'Yin' (Fig. 2, C).

Kann shows that a minimum of 63 million Szechuen Military dollars were turned out by official sources up until 1928; and there were many more from unofficial mints. The minor varieties are so numerous that no attempt has yet been made to catalogue them in detail, and groupings are generally limited to two varieties of the character 'Min' (D) and two of the character 'Kuo' (E). However, it is suggested that there is, in fact, a much more positive variety in the 'Chungking' dollar illustrated (fig.2): and it is a coin not easily found these days.

1. Cheng Te-k'un, 'A brief history of Chinese Silver Currency', Selections from *The Numismatist: Modern Foreign Currency*.
 2. E. Kann, *Illustrated Catalog of Chinese Coins*, 1966, pp.271-2.

Help wanted

Prashant Kulkarni has sent this photograph of an Afghan (?) coin-like medal and asks if any member can read and translate the reverse legend. Answers to the Editor please.



A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 1987 TO ALL OF YOU