

ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

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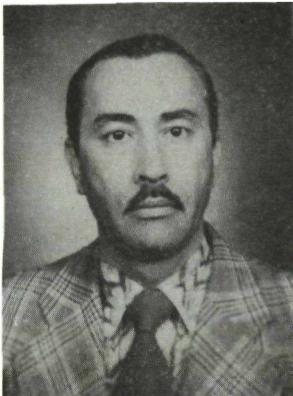
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NEWSLETTER 112

May - June 1988



This month's personality is Michael Legg, our membership secretary. Michael was born in Darjeeling, India in August 1941, the third India-born generation of a Welsh tea-planting family. His father was an officer in the 7th Gurkhas and his mother Nepalese, the daughter of the last Rana Prime Minister of Nepal, who had descended from the Udaipur Rajputs. Both parents were killed in Mandalay, Burma, during the bombing of early 1942 and Michael was brought up by his maternal grandparents in Darjeeling and later in Bangalore.

He was educated in Bangalore, Penang and Singapore, and in fact settled in Singapore from 1956 to 1966. After education he entered the real estate and then the airline business. He came to England to study surveying in 1966 and entered Government service in 1967, giving up his studies to become a graphic designer in the Civil Service. He has now been employed in this capacity for 21 years and helped to pioneer the use of video in Govt. educational and training films.

An early interest in Indian coins was developed when his maternal grandfather, as Chief Accountant for Imperial Tobacco Co. in India from 1945 to 1953, brought back from his auditing trips around India, the coins of the various Princely States he visited. These coins formed the beginnings of his now rather large collection. After residing in Malaya and Singapore his interests spread to include the coins of China and S. E. Asia. He had developed a deep interest in the coinage and history of the various East India companies and helped to catalogue coins in the Singapore Museum (The Raffles Collection). Since residing in the U.K. Michael has extended his collection of coins of the Indian Princely States, China and S. E. Asia and has become deeply involved in the study of the history and coinage of the Rajput states and of Tipu Sultan and Haider Ali of Mysore (especially since much of his childhood was spent visiting the remains of the forts and architecture of these two Muslim rulers of Mysore). He has a keen interest in museum design and display techniques and the use of video techniques in Numismatic education. His lifelong ambition has been to find curatorial work in a museum with an extensive Oriental collection and to use innovative methods to bring such collections to public view. In addition to the coins, he is keenly interested in the charms and amulets of China and S. E. Asia, Thai Buddhist medallions and all forms of Buddhist artefacts as well as carved jade. He is an avid buyer of oriental numismatic books and photographs of the Indian princes, as well as historical books on the princely states. He is a keen photographer of numismatic and jewellery items and a Charter Member of Photographers International Association. In 1987 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society. Michael is married with two small daughters. Mrs. Legg is Malaysian Chinese from the state of Kedah.

Report from the Membership Secretary

(This is a selective precis of a report prepared for ONS officers)

During the year ending 31 March 1988, 110 new members were added to the membership register, including a significant number from South Asia, whilst 40 members were lost through resignations and other causes. The detailed figures are as follows:

REGION	New members since 1. 4. 1987	Resignations etc. since 1. 4. 1987	Total of current members
American	26	13	147
European	17	8	167
General	3	5	32
South Asian	57	—	93
U.K. & Eire	7	14	89
Total	110	40	528

An updated membership list should be available in a couple of months. One matter of concern is the dearth of young members of the society. We need to consider ways in which the society can foster interest in oriental coins among young collectors and encourage them to become members. This could involve our more experienced members giving talks and lectures to local numismatic societies on a larger scale than at present, and if possible, in schools or colleges.

ONS Meetings

1. A reminder that the next London meeting will be on *Saturday 18 June* commencing 14.15 at 9 Montague Street, London WC 1.

2. This year's ONS meeting in Tübingen, West Germany, took place on April 30th - May 1st. Some thirty members attended, mostly from West Germany, but Switzerland, Austria and Turkey were also represented. Five papers were given during the two formal sessions. These were:

- i. St. Heidemann: The succession of coin types as evidence of bronze coinage withdrawals in Northern Syria under the Zengids and Ayyubids.
- ii. D. Schnädelbach: Ilkhan or Beylik ? Problems of Anatolian coinage in the XIVth Century.
- iii. H. Wilski: The riyal sebili in Tunis in the time of Mahmud II, 1808 - 1839.
- iv. J.-C. Hinrichs: Chronological discrepancies on Rum-Seljuq silver coinage in the XIIIth century.
- v. L. Ilisch: The beginnings of Ottoman bronze coinage in the light of the latest Pergamon excavations.

The event was enjoyed by all the participants not least because of the hospitality of the Max-Planck Society as administered in its guest-house by Dr. Claus Pelling. The 1989 meeting will take place at around the same dates.

Members' News

Dr. A. H. Siddiqui ...) is working on a book on Asif Jahi coinage. He would welcome details, rubbings, photographs of unusual or rare coins from the Nizam's territories in members' collections. The series embraces coins struck in the name of the Moghal emperors from Mohammed Shah onwards from such mints as Hydera-bad, Khujista Bunyad, Burhanpur, Elichpur, Machhlipatan, Arcot, Karpa, Daulatabad, Amravati etc, (though not all coins from these mints are attributable to the Asif Jahis).

New and Recent Publications

1. In Newsletter 110 we mentioned the forthcoming publication by Oxford University Press, India of a volume entitled 'The Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India'. The book, comprising a number of individual papers on this subject, edited by J. F. Richards, is now available at £16.50 in the U.K. (SBN 19 561953 6).
2. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris has brought out a book on the Vietnamese coins in its collection. This book is reviewed below.
3. Members will be interested to note the recent publication of a new book entitled "Money in the Bank: An Illustrated Introduction to the Money Collection of The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation", 196 illustrations, 204pp. Illustrated with colour throughout. By Joe Cribb, London 1987.
This book is now available for £30 from Mr. S. Addis, Group Liaison Manager, Hongkong Bank Group, P O Box 199, 99 Bishopsgate, London EC2P 2LA. Please add £3 for postage in the U.K., and £4 elsewhere.
This lavishly produced volume has been published for the Hongkong Bank Group by Spink and Son Ltd. It covers in detail the monetary history of Hong Kong and the bank notes issued by the Hongkong Bank and the Chartered Mercantile in Hong Kong, China, Japan, Malaysia and Ceylon. It is based on the Bank's extensive collection of Hong Kong coins and its own and the Chartered Mercantile's bank notes. It also has chapters dealing with the history of money in China as illustrated by the Bank's collection with particular reference to the traditional copper coinage, paper money, silver ingot currency and the use of foreign and native dollars. Particularly important in this context is the Bank's holding of Sycee.
4. Joe Cribb is also working on a catalogue of Chinese silver money ingots. The catalogue, which is currently at press and due to appear next year, lists 1300 examples, of which over 300 are in the British Museum collection. It will also be well illustrated.
5. The Brunei History Society (Pusat Sejarah Brunei) has recently published a book by William L. S. Barrett entitled "Brunei and Nusantara - History in coinage". This book of 273 pages, illustrated throughout, comprises a survey of the coins of Brunei and the currencies in circulation in the South China Sea area over the centuries. Details of price are not available and interested members are advised to write to the Brunei History Society, Bandar Sri Begawan, Brunei.
6. Numismatic Literature no. 119, March 1988, published by the ANS, New York, contains details of a large number of articles and papers on Near, Middle and particularly Far East numismatics written in the last 2 or 3 years. The list is too long to publish here and we would recommend interested members to consider subscribing to this excellent publication, which comes out twice a year.
7. Stefan Nebehay has published an article entitled "Zur älteren Ilhanidischen Silberprägung in Mardin", in *Litterae Numismaticae Vindobonenses*, Band 3 1987 (Vienna 1987). The article provides a die-study of a group of Ilkhanid dirhems of Arghun from the mint of Mardin.
8. Spink Numismatic Circular for April 1988 contains the eighth and final part of O. D. Creswell's paper on the Bullet Coinage of Siam.
9. ONS member Wei Yue Wang has sent details of a work entitled "A compilation of Pictures of Chinese ancient Paper Money". It is edited by the Inner Mongolian Numismatic Research Institute 'China Numismatics' Editorial Department, and published by the China Finance Publishing House, Beijing, 1987. The compilation is in three parts. The first part contains pictures of the ancient paper money and printing plates of the governments of the Song, Jin, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The second part contains diagrams and copies of certain ancient paper money or notes printed during those periods but not belonging to the official government issues, as well as some notable forgeries. The third part, an appendix, contains information on related material such as seals, proclamations etc. Some of the material in the book is published for the first time. No details of price are available.

'Catalogue des Monnaies Vietnamiennes' by François Thierry. Published by the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1988. 114pp, 39 plates; price 330 FF.

Review by Nick Rhodes

It is very pleasing to see another volume in the series of catalogues of coins in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The standard of production and scholarship is excellent, and every variety is clearly illustrated on the fine plates.

The collection consists of a comprehensive range of nearly two thousand base metal coins, perhaps the finest such collection in Europe, with only a very few pieces in gold and silver. As such it is complementary to the collection in the Paris Mint, published by Mr. Thierry in 1986, which consists almost exclusively of gold and silver coins. Together, these volumes contain a welcome reappraisal of the whole coinage of Vietnam.

The catalogue starts with a survey of the monetary history of Vietnam, from the 3rd century BC until 1945 with several clear maps showing the extent of the territory ruled by the various dynasties. The coinage of Vietnam presents the numismatist with severe problems because of the enormous number of private issues copying Chinese, Japanese or Vietnamese prototypes. Mr. Thierry explains how this was apparently tolerated by the authorities, who generally issued too few coins to satisfy local demand, the balance being made up initially by genuine Chinese coins, and later supplemented by local imitations.

The main part of the book is the catalogue, which gives a detailed description of each coin, including metal, weight and provenance of each specimen. Varieties are listed separately, and little space is wasted listing the numerous duplicates of the more common pieces. Useful and extensive explanatory notes are included throughout the text giving detailed comments on the more interesting or problematic pieces. Mr. Thierry attempts to specify which pieces are unofficial copies, but this is a thankless task, and many copies probably remain unrecognised. Similarly an attempt is made to date some of the private issues using the only criteria available, calligraphy and fabric, but the conclusions must remain, in many cases, unproven.

As the collection is so comprehensive, the usefulness of the catalogue could have been increased if a few of the more significant types not represented were recorded for reference; for example the coin issued by the Qian Long emperor of China during his invasion of 1789.

In conclusion, Mr. Thierry is to be congratulated on a fine work, which must be essential reading for any student of the series.

The Mrohaung dynasty of Arakan: early coins with Persian legends only by M. B. Mitchiner

The Mrohaung dynasty was founded by Naramekhla (1430-34) shortly before he established his seat at the newly built city of Mrohaung (Mrauk U) in 1433 and it ended when overcome by the Burmese king Bodawpaya in 1784. Coinage consisted almost entirely of silver tankahs struck to the prevailing weight standard of the Bengal Sultanate. The Arakanese silver tankah continued to weigh 10 to 10½ grammes until the fall of the dynasty, but the name tankah may have been forgotten since European travellers of the eighteenth century referred to the coins as rupees.

Inspection of the coins permits easy division into three separate groups according to the script used. Early coins bear inscriptions written in Persian alone. The middle group consists of coins bearing trilingual inscriptions written in Persian, Bengali and Arakanese. These coins bear dates running from BE 955 to 984 (AD 1593-1622). Later coins bear Arakanese inscriptions alone and they are dated from BE 996 to 1146 (AD 1634-1784). In addition to these three classes there exists a small series of quarter tankahs minted at Chittagong. The coins have been published by Phayre (1882), by Mitchiner (1979, nos. 2543-64), by Robinson and Shaw (1980, types 7.1 - 7.42) and by San Tha Aung (1979). More recently Robinson provided a provisional discussion of the tankahs bearing Persian legends alone (1982) and also the small series of quarter tankahs (1993), while Robinson and Rhodes have considered the tankahs bearing trilingual inscriptions (1983; 1987 draft).

The present study of the early coinage is based on a group of ten coins found at Vesali and collected by Dr. Donald Gear while he was working in Burma. This small group of silver tankahs includes most previously known issues bearing Persian legends alone and it provides substantial help in elucidating the structure of the early coinage, albeit still somewhat tentatively.

The early coins were issued within a period of time defined by the foundation of the dynasty in 1430 and the introduction of trilingual coinage by Min Razagyi in BE 955 (AD 1593). During this time the striking of coinage appears to have been sporadic and it was concentrated around two phases when the Arakanese kingdom was subject to strong influence from the Bengal Sultanate in the north.

At the foundation of the dynasty Naramekhla came from exile in Bengal to take his throne with the help of Bengali troops. Naramekhla (1430-34) and then his brother Min Khari ('Ali Khan: 1434-59) ruled Arakan as vassals of the Bengal Sultans until the 1440's when full independence was assumed. Arakanese independence was further asserted when Min Khari's son Basawpyu (Kalima Shah: 1459-82) marched north and occupied Chittagong in 1459. The first group of coins appears to have been struck during this phase when the dynasty was establishing itself. The series commences with an issue of tankahs closely modelled on those of the Bengal Sultan Nasir al din Mahmud Shah I (AH 846-64: AD 1442-59). They were struck in Mahmud Shah's name, probably during the 1440's, while Min Khari was still acknowledging Bengali suzerainty. These are followed by a stylistically related issue of tankahs bearing purely Arakanese titlature; coins probably struck during the later part of Min Khari's reign. A third issue of tankahs appears to have been struck after Basawpyu had occupied Chittagong in 1459. This is the first issue to bear the Kalima – perhaps in deference to the substantial Moslem population of Chittagong: a Moslem enclave in what was otherwise a predominantly Buddhist kingdom.

1. Min Khari (1434-59) – Type A: in the name of Mahmud Shah: c. 1440's. 10.18 gm.

ناصر الدين
و
الدين ابو
المجاهد محمود
شاه السلطان



المؤيد بتا [يد]
الرحمن خليفه [الله]
بالحجب و البرهان



- see also: 1. Robinson (1982) no. 9 (=San Tha Aung, 21b)
2. Robinson and Rhodes (1987) no. 9 (Domrow collection)¹

The author's coin is of Arakanese provenance (Dr. Gear: ex Vesali) and San Tha Aung's coin is also likely to have an Arakanese provenance. The coins have an Arakanese style (e.g. no trace of marginal inscription) and fabric, but their inscription gives standard Bengali titlature of the period (e.g. Mitchiner 1977, nos. 2745-8).

2. Min Khari (1434-59) – Type B: with Arakanese titlature: c. late 1440's - 1459. 10.04 gm.

ابو النصر
صاحب فيل
خلد مظفر
شاه السلطان



السلطان
بن السلطان
تاج الدين
و
الدين



- see also: 1. Robinson (1982) no. 10 (= San Tha Aung, 21c)

The full inscription can be read by inspection of both coins. The titles "Abu al Nasr" and "Taj al din" were also to be used by later Arakanese rulers.

The title "Saheb Fil" (Owner of the Elephant) means that the issuing ruler had the distinction of possessing one of the special Royal Elephants (a White Elephant or a Red Elephant). The first documented Arakanese Royal Elephant was the White Elephant found during Min Dawlya's reign (1482-92: San Tha Aung 1982, p.29). The next was captured by Min Razagyi from Pegu in 1599 – an elephant which the King of Pegu had earlier captured from Ayuthia in 1564.

Min Khari was also known by the Persian name of 'Ali Khan. The form Muzaffar Shah shown on the present issue of coins is not documented for any Arakanese ruler of this period (a time for which documentary evidence is particularly scanty) and it was, perhaps, borrowed from Min Khari's former suzerain, Nasir al din - Abu al Muzaffar - Mahmud Shah of Bengal.

3. Basawpyu (1459-82) 10.03 gm

[لا اله الا الله
رسول الله
ختمه
...
عم



السلطان
[أ] له عظم تا [ج]
الدنيا و الدين
[أ] ابو الفتح كحه
بن عليشا [اه]



This is the first issue of Arakanese tankahs to bear the Kalima on the obverse – an inscription that was thenceforth to be a standard feature on the Arakanese tankahs with Persian legends alone. This is also the only issue with a secular epithet (rather than 'Khalad Allah Mulkah') beneath the Kalima. Basawpyu was known by the title Kalima Shah, perhaps a later pseudonym applied to him as the first ruler to issue coins bearing the Kalima. On this coin the ruler's name appears to read Kamu, but the ending is not clear. The ruler also appears to call himself 'son of Ali Shah'. Basawpyu's father was Min Khari who is recorded to have used the Persian title 'Ali Khan. The word beneath the Kalima can be read as Chatsanah and linked with Basawpyu's capture of Chittagong in 1459. However, in making such a suggestion it is important to note that the normal Persian rendering for Chittagong is Chatganu (var.). The reading of the final word is not clear.

After the early phase of Arakanese coinage there appears to have been a hiatus until the kingdom was once again subjected to influence from Bengal at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The northern town of Chittagong was occupied by the Sultan of Bengal about 1512 and then by the ruler of Tripura, who issued commemorative coins there in 1513 (Saka 1435). The region was re-occupied by Bengal and only passed back into Arakanese hands when Min Bin (1531-53) marched north in 1538 and re-established Arakanese authority.

The second group of tankahs should be viewed in context with Arakan's problems during the early sixteenth century, a situation which might suggest that the striking of coins was provoked by the necessity for paying either the soldiers of the Arakanese army or the Sultan of Bengal at times when his suzerainty was acknowledged. This contrasts with the later situation in which coins were struck to commemorate such ceremonial events as the coronation of the Arakanese ruler.

Coins of the present period were issued in the names of Ilyas Shah, 'Ali Shah and Taj Shah. The coins commonly cite the patronymic, though this is often either off the flan or else stylised beyond ready interpretation. However, sufficient specimens are available to show that both Ilyas Shah and Taj Shah called themselves "son of Sikandar". This simplifies attribution since only two of the potential issuers had the same father. Gazapati (1523-25) is recorded as having used the title Ilyas Shah and he was the son of Min Raza (1501-23). Min Raza's other son was Min Bin (1531-53), the conqueror of Chittagong. Min Bin is not recorded to have used the title Taj Shah, but on the coins this title is prefixed by a word which can be read as "Muina" – perhaps an attempt to render his Arakanese name in Persian script. 'Ali Shah, who issued the remaining coins, can be identified as Thazata (1525-31) who ruled between Gazapati and Min Bin. 'Ali Shah is one of Thazata's recorded titles.

4. Gazapati (1523-25) (in the name of Ilyas Shah) – Type A 9.85 gm

[لا اله الا الله
رسول الله
خدا الله
ملكه



السلطان [ت]
[أ] ابو النصر
[ار] يا ساه
بن سكيندر
السلطان [ت]



see also: 1. Robinson (1982) no. 2 (= RS 7.2: Phayre 29)
2. San Tha Aung (1979) 23b

As on his other coins, the ruler's name is slightly contracted so that it shows a single letter 'S' serving for both the final Sin of Ilyas and the initial Sin of Shah – i.e. Ilya - shah / Ilyas - ah.

The name Sikandar seen on published coins of other types nearly always occurs as a patronymic, as on the present issue. One coin that could have been issued by Sikandar, himself, is Robinson 1982 no. 7 (Ashmolean), but there is not enough inscription visible to confirm this. Sikandar is identified by the coins as Min Raza (1501-23), but the title Sikandar is not recorded for any ruler of this period.

5, 6, 7. Gazapati (1523-25) (in the name of Ilyas Shah) – Type B 9.94, 10.00, 10.00 gm

[لا اله الا الله
رسول الله
الله ب
[السلطان]
بن للطان [ت]
اليا ساه
صاحب قبل
سليح بن



see also: 1. Robinson (1982) no. 5
2. San Tha Aung (1979) 22a

The inscriptions show some stylisation and the patronymic is not preserved on extant specimens. The title Saheb Fil (Owner of the Elephant) is once again used – Gazapati could well have been in possession of the White Elephant documented to have been found during Min Dawlya's reign (1482-92).

– Thazata (1525-31) (in the name of 'Ali Shah)

KALIMA

السلطان
رحمن ابو
[ا] لمظفر علي بن [اه]
سلطان خا [د]
الله ملك [ه]

see Robinson (1982) no. 1 (= RS 7.1: Phayre 28)

This type is not represented among the group of coins from Vesali catalogued here.

8, 9 Min Bin (1531-53) (in the name of Muina Taj Shah) – Type A 10.20, 9.60 gm

الله الا
الله محمد
رسول ا
الله ب
[ا] سلطان [ن]
موينا
[ا] رحمت تاج
شاه السلطان [ن]
[بن] سكندر



see also: 1. Robinson (1982) no. 3 (= RS 7.3: Phayre 30)

The inscription has been completed from inspection of the three coins cited; the patronymic Sikandar being best read from the British Museum coin (Phayre 30).

10. Min Bin (1531-53) (in the name of Muina Taj Shah) – Type B 10.17 gm

الله الا
الله محمد
رسول ا
الله ب



رحمن تاج
شاه السلطان [ن]



see also: 1. Robinson (1982) no. 6
2. San Tha Aung (1979) 22b

The reverse inscription cannot be completely read from the coins cited. They appear to have been struck for Taj Shah, with the word Taj now split between two lines and acquiring an extra stroke.

The small series of quarter tankahs bearing the mint name Chatganu (Chittagong: recovered by Min Bin in 1538) was probably struck at about the same time as the present tankahs. Production of coinage in Arakan then appears to have entered a period of hibernation until BE 955 (AD 1593) when Min Razagyi introduced dated coins bearing trilingual inscriptions.

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Note

1. The obverse of the Domrow coin bears the same titles as the coin illustrated above but arranged differently, viz:

الدنيا
ناصر والد (بن)
ابو المجاهد محمود
شاه السلطان

Spink & Son held their third annual sale of Islamic coins at the Hotel Baur au Lac, Zürich on 1 June 1988. The catalogue, illustrating all 507 lots, includes many rare pieces, and a fine selection of Yemeni coinage. Further details from Spink & Son Ltd., 5-7 King Street, St. James's, London SW1Y 6QS, or Löwenstrasse 65, 8001 Zürich, Switzerland.

Sasanian-style Drahms from the Muslim Conquest of Sijistan by Stuart Sears

The Sasanian-style drahms with the date 20 are among the earliest documents of the Muslim state anywhere. They differ little from their Sasanian prototypes and, consequently, reflect the ambiguous character of the Muslim state in the seventh century. Sasanian-style drahms, in fact, represent a transitional coinage that was minted irregularly until the coinage reforms of the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik at the end of the seventh century.

The Sijistan mint was quite active under the late Sasanian rulers. During Yazdgard III's reign, it minted drahms nearly every year until and including the last year of his reign, 20 Y.E./31-32 A.H./651-52 A.D.

After the conquest of the province, drahms continued to be minted with Yazdgard's name and the regnal date 20 on them but also with the Arabic legend **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ**, bism allah, "In the name of God", appearing in the outside obverse margin as a tell-tale mark of Muslim sovereignty.

The first Muslim issue continued to be minted after 20 Y.E./ 31-32 A.H./ 651-52 A.D. although the date on these coins was never adjusted. This fact is attested in various ways. Not only is there a gap of six or fourteen years between the date on this issue and the date on the next issue – depending on the reading and authenticity of certain dates – but the large number of extant specimens suggests a large mintage which can only be accounted for by the use of the date 20 after 20 Y.E./31-32 A.H./651-52 A.D. Out of some two hundred and twenty Sasanian-style drahms from Sijistan which I have examined, spanning a period of at least fifty years, forty two or one sixth of these coins bear the date 20 (Y.E.). Only three die links are attested in this sample which is proportionally far fewer than the number of die links found among later issues. Since the Muslims did not even control Sijistan for the entirety of this year, a great number, perhaps the bulk, of these drahms must have been struck after 20 Y.E./31-32 A.H./651-52 A.D.

The drahms of this date bear some interesting anomalies. Two of the drahms examined do not have the legend **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ** bism allah, in the outside obverse margin and may not properly belong to this issue. Instead, they have the enigmatic Pahlavi inscription **𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥**, afafd (?), located in the same quadrant of the outside obverse margin.¹ As far as I am aware, the inscription is unknown to Sasanian drahms and only vaguely resembles some Tabaristan drahms issued during the 'Abbasid caliphate which have **𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥**, afd, struck in the identical spot.² If the two drahms are late imitations, they could not be imitations from such a late date since two countermarks found on one specimen³ are attested on Sijistan drahms of 56 A.H. (676-77 A.D.) and 64 A.H. (664-65 A.D.). Although the legend is enigmatic, it is quite plausible that these two drahms are predecessors to the regular Muslim issue of 20 Y.E./31-32 A.H./651-52 A.D. that has the legend **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ**, bism allah.



		<i>obverse</i>		<i>reverse</i>	
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	gdh	May kingship	𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	wist	twenty
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	afzut	increase			
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	yzdkrt	Yazdgard	𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	sk	Sijistan
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	afafd (?)	(?)			

The legend **بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ**, bism allah, often appears irregularly written on drahms of the date 20. Two of the drahms I have examined have the letter b strangely detached from the bism in the bism allah so that it appears as: **𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥**⁴ In addition, with only one die link attested, fully ten of these drahms have an extra lam added to the allah in bism allah so that the legend appears as: **𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥**.⁵ It is remarkable that these kinds of errors occur so frequently on drahms of this date and not at all on drahms of later dates when a deterioration of iconography is documented. Clearly, the Sijistan die cutters were not initially familiar with Arabic script. That they quickly and thoroughly mastered Arabic script may bear witness to the hold of the Arab conquerors on this province.



		<i>obverse</i>		<i>reverse</i>	
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	gdh	May kingship	𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	wist	twenty
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	afzut	increase			
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	yzdkrt	Yazdgard	𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	sk	Sijistan
𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥	(sic) bism allah	in the name of God			



(A. U. Rahman)

		<i>obverse</i>		<i>reverse</i>	
الله	gdh	May kingship	سوم	wist	twenty
سوم	(crude) afzut	increase			
سوم	yzdkrt	Yazdgard	سوم	sk	Sijistan
سوم الله	(sic) bismallah	in the name of God			

Notes

1. One is in the A.N.S. collection, no. 1975.238.10. The other belongs to Mr. Rahman of Hong Kong.
2. John Walker, *Catalogue of Arab-Sasanian Coins* (London: The British Museum, 1941), p.174.
3. A.N.S. specimen no. 1975.238.10.
4. One belongs to W. B. Warden (wt. 4.06 g.) The other was in the stock of Stephen Album as of 11-87.
5. The majority of these were in the stock of Stephen Album as of 11-87 when he generously allowed me to examine them. Because he may not still have these coins separated as I have separated them, I will include the weight of these coins as well as the arbitrary numbers which I assigned to them during my study of them. They are numbers 101 (4.18 g.), 102 (4.00 g.), 103 (3.63 g.), 104 (4.02 g.), 105 (4.09 g.), 106 (4.09 g.) and 113 (4.03 g.). In addition, a like specimen belongs to Mr. Rahman of Hong Kong. Two others can be found in Walker's catalogue, no. 8 (pl. I, 7) and no. 9 (pl. I, 8.).

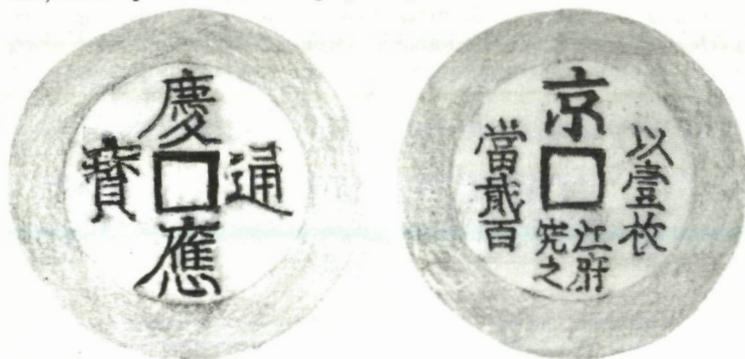
A Japanese Pattern Multiple Cash – N. G. Rhodes

I illustrate below an unusual Japanese crudely cast multiple cash (wt. 49.7g) which has not, as far as I am aware, been published in English. Indeed, I have only seen it mentioned in one Japanese book.¹



The obverse reads 潤澤通寶, which I believe may be translated as “abundant coin”, and does not refer to any particular era.
The reverse reads 皇以二枚當一朱 “Imperial (mint), two pieces worth 1 shū (of silver)”.

Ogawa Hiroshi lists this piece after the rare pattern pieces of the Keio era 慶應 (1865-7), which are somewhat similar in style, and have a similar reverse inscription reading “Kyo(to Mint), 1 piece worth 200”. Although the example illustrated below is finely cast, other specimens are roughly cast, similar to the above coin.



The similarity in style indicates that this rare piece is probably a pattern issued in or about the Keio era (1864-7), but can anyone shed any more light on its origins?

Notes

1. *Illustrated History of Japanese Coins* (Nippon Kahei Zushi) by Ogawa Hiroshi, Tokyo 1964, vol. 9, p.24.