



ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 136 Spring 1993

ONS News

1. From the Secretary-General

When ONS was set up in 1970, its primary objective was to put in touch with each other, those people around the world who were interested in non-western numismatics. To achieve this objective it was decided to require the publication of an address at which members could be contacted and to insist on an adequate response to relevant correspondence from other members. The Society imposes the minimum of requirements on members but this is one of the most important in achieving our objective. Please, therefore, respond to members' letters, however briefly, and so spread understanding of oriental numismatics amongst our 500 members.

M. R. Broome

2. From the Editor

The response to my request in Newsletter 135 for more articles has so far been encouraging. There is still, however, a great lack of material on Near and Middle East series. Would members specialising in these fields like to remedy this?

3. ONS meeting in New York

There will be a meeting of the ONS American region on Saturday, June 12, 1993 during the Spring New York International Numismatic Convention, June 11-13, 1993 at the Sheraton N.Y. Hotel (7th Ave. & 52nd St., New York City). The guest speakers will be William F. Spengler and Wayne G. Sayles who will talk on "Figural Bronze Coinage of the Zengids & Ayyubids in the Jazira" and the upcoming Volume II of their book concerning the above subject.

"Turkoman Figural Bronze Coins and their Iconography" Vol. I by William F. Spengler and Wayne G. Sayles is now in print and available for \$35 plus postage from The Celator, P.O. Box 123, Lodi, WI 53555 (telephone 609-592-4684). This is a definitive corpus of the figural bronzes struck by the Artuqid rulers of Hisn Kayfa, Amid, Mardin & Khartpert. This book is primarily designed to aid the collector in attributing and understanding coins of this enigmatic series. This is the result of four years intensive research, including examination of thousands of specimens in all the major museums and private collections. (It is hoped to publish a review of this book in a future Newsletter. Editor)

4. Pakistan branch

In Newsletter 135 we mentioned the formation of the Pakistan branch of the South Asian region of the Society. The inauguration took place on 11 January this year and obtained good media coverage. Pictured below are members of the new branch.



Pictured from left to right are K. A. Ellahi, Mobin Ahmad, Hamid Shabbir, Shafqat Mirza, Sarfraz A. Shah and A. U. Khan.

5. ONS meeting in Tübingen

This year's meeting takes place on 24 & 25 April in the Max-Planck-Haus, Spemannstr. 36. The programme will be:

Saturday 24 April: Stephen Album - In memoriam Craig Burns

Florian Schwarz - The central Asian coinage of the Ghuzz

Stefan Heidemann - al-'Aqr, the Islamic Assur - a contribution towards historical topography.

Lutz Ilisch - A synopsis of a thousand years of Islamic coining in Damascus, 650-1650.

Gerd Rüdinger Puin & Hans Wilski - an unusual Lionalter.

Sunday 25 April:

Johann-Christian Hinrichs - The coins of the Hamit Ogullari

Rolf Ehlert - Problems regarding the Egyptian copper & silver coinage of Sulaiman the Magnificent

Hans Wilski - The Agiasos hoard

6. The latest Occasional Papers are being distributed with this Newsletter. One is by Tony Goodwin and is entitled "Imitations of the folles of Constant II". The other is an Index of items of interest from the Newsletters 1976-1992. It has been compiled by Ken Wiggins and is being generously sponsored by Galata Print.

7. A second **Study Day on Arab-Byzantine Coinage** will be held at the British Museum on Saturday, July 3. For further information please contact Marcus Phillips or Sue Tyler Smith, P O Box 348, Biggleswade, Beds. SG18 8EQ. Tel: 0767 312112.

Members' News

1. Dr R. C. C. Fynes, Wolfson College, Oxford OX2 6UD, UK, is working on a source-book for ancient Indian history in the period c.550 BC - AD 550. The numismatic evidence is to be given extensive consideration in the book. Dr Fynes asks members to send him details of any research they may be engaged on which relates to this period. He is particularly keen to obtain offprints & photocopies of articles written by scholars in Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. Full acknowledgement will be given for any help received.

2. Heinz Bons, is interested in acquiring Indian temple tokens, Mysore coins by mint, date & variety, South Indian fanams, pagodas & copper coins, British issues for Ceylon (elephant type) and countermarked Ottoman coins.

Other News

1. The Turkish Numismatic Society is planning an international symposium in Istanbul, 8-9 November 1993. The topics will cover Turkish coins from 550 AH and Islamic and classical coins from Asia Minor. Papers should reach the Society by 15 June at the latest. Details are available from Yilmaz Izmirlier, TND, Posta Kutusu 22, Istanbul.

2. The fourth annual conference of the Numismatic Society of Calcutta was due to be held in March this year. Details of the event can be obtained from the Secretary, Debasish Paul,...

3. Numismatics in Syria

A refresher seminar for museum and excavation staff took place December 12-17, 1992, at the National Museum, Damascus. It was organised by the Directorate General of Antiquities and co-sponsored and financed by the French Institute for Arabic Studies and the French Institute for Near Eastern Archaeology, both headquartered in Damascus. Dr M. Al-Kholi, keeper of the Coin Cabinet at the national Museum, and the ONS General Region secretary (Paris) were responsible for the two full-day sessions devoted to Moslem numismatics. The latter took the opportunity of his stay in Syria to meet his ONS colleagues in the country, including Mr Batman and Mr Djaroueh who drove through the snow and sleet all the way from and back to Hama and Aleppo respectively, for a chat in Damascus.

G.P.H.

4. Mr R. Van Laere, at the Provincie Limburg Munt- en Penningkabinet, Kielenstraat 15, B-3700 Tongeren, Belgium, wonders whether members would like to donate some oriental coins to the coin cabinet so that visitors can see what oriental coins look like. He writes that the cabinet was set up a few years ago and soon became the second largest public collection in Belgium, and certainly the most active. There is an attractive permanent exhibition and visitors can peer down a binocular microscope and use a balance and other tools. Although the cabinet has a very limited budget and the aim is not to create a *large* general collection, Mr Van Laere would like to create a small reference collection that includes oriental coins. The cabinet is currently closed for a major renovation but will re-open next spring.

5. François Thierry informs us that the new Money Museum was opened in Shanghai on 25 September 1992. The Numismatic Gallery (Zhongguo huobiguan, 21 Lingyuan Road, Shanghai) looks after and displays the coin collection of the Shanghai Museum. It is the most important collection of its type in China and probably the best collection of Chinese coins in the world. It contains an enormous quantity of material in the greatest variety and with many great rarities. Some of the extremely rare or unique items are the Gao Chang jili currency of Turfan, the gold Qian Dao currency of the Southern Sung, the Da Yuan Guo bao currency, the gold coinage of the Western King, Zhang Xianzhong (1644), moulds for banliang and wuzhu, and mould matrices for Wang Mang coinage. The opening ceremony took place before a gathering of the principal numismatists in China, including Zhu Huo, Chen Zunxiang, Tang Shifu, Chen Yuan, Wang Qingzheng, Jiang Qixiang, Wei Yuewang. Four ONS members were also present: Roger Wai-San Doo, Robert Puddester, Wei Yuewang & François Thierry (pictured below). On 26 September there was a seminar on the currency of Central Asia, during which Jiang Qixiang gave a presentation on the Jagatai hoard of Almamigh.



Messrs Doo, Thierry, Wei and Puddester.

Book Reviews

Money, Markets, and Trade in early Southeast Asia, by Robert S. Wicks. Southeast Asia Program, 180 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1992. 354pp, with 75 maps, tables and illustrations; card covers.

This study by Robert Wicks bears the subtitle "The development of indigenous monetary systems to AD 1400". The emphasis of his study is on money, rather than on coinage. He deals with the role played by money in mediating such transactions as donating gifts (for instance: to monasteries or by kings), paying taxes or pursuing ordinary commerce. Contemporary documentary references provide the principal source material. Some of these sources are engraved inscriptions set up in the locality to which they relate, others are references made by foreigners who were frequently Chinese. Robert Wicks has assembled a comprehensive body of evidence in a field that has not previously been properly researched. He has digested his information and presented it in a well organised and easily read format.

Discussion of the coins, themselves - whose usage was neither continuous nor universal - is well integrated with the documentary evidence, but it is not exhaustive. There are numerous text references to his detailed bibliography, so the reader principally interested in coins will have no difficulty in discovering where to look. Coverage of the archaeological evidence is not detailed, though numerous references are provided.

The true strength of this book lies in the wealth of documentary information that the author has assembled. This is what makes the book an indispensable addition to the library of anyone wishing to understand the early currencies of Southeast Asia.

The area covered by Wicks' study extends across mainland Southeast Asia from Bangla Desh and Arakan (W. Burma) in the west to Cambodia and Vietnam in the east; and from this region southwards across the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian islands as far as the Philippines. The period considered runs from the early centuries of the Christian era until around AD 1400, though discussion of early Chinese and Roman references to this part of the world is restricted.

Criticisms are of a minor nature. It is a pity that the large denomination silver coin ascribed to Niticandra, illustrated on page 84, does not bear his full name. Only "ticandra" is legible, leaving open alternative attributions to Bhuticandra or Priticandra. Wicks illustrated a better specimen in his PhD thesis, to which he makes frequent reference. The statement on page 92, referring to late silver coins of Harikela, that "the bracteates would not have been suitable for exchange purposes, as they were simply too large and fragile" does not ring true. Would the author also dismiss medieval German bracteates so curtly? The footnote on page 226 saying that coins of the "Namo series, found in silver and gold. Although at one time considered genuine, specimens are now thought to be modern fantasies" deserves more discussion. There are some gold namo which appear genuine. Other gold pieces and all of the very few silver specimens seen by the reviewer appear to be modern forgeries. The bulk of the namo coinage was not made in either of these metals, but in a peculiar quaternary alloy of silver, copper, nickel and zinc.¹ The copper-nickel-zinc alloy was well known in medieval China, where it was called paktong. The use of silver-paktong is peculiar to the namo coinage, though paktong was occasionally used for making early Thai bullet money. The use of an obsolete Chinese-inspired alloy, combined with the forms of corrosion seen on this main group of namo coins, renders their dismissal as modern fantasies unjustified.

I enjoyed reading Robert Wicks' book and warmly recommend it to anyone interested in learning more about the early commerce and currency systems of Southeast Asia.

Michael Mitchiner

Note

1. M. B. Mitchiner and A. M. Pollard, Early South-east Asian currency systems. Supplemento n. 65 agli Annali, vol. 50 (1990), fasc. 4, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli 1990.

Le thaler de Marie-Thérèse (1780), Grand voyageur du temps et de l'espace, by François Regoudy. (Histoires de la monnaie, 1), Paris (Musée de la Monnaie) 1992, 84 pp, FF 150.

In this first instalment of a new series published by the Paris Mint Museum, ONS member F. Regoudy describes a batch of 672 thalers, almost all of them restrikes of the Maria Theresa 1780 issue (MTT). Seized in 1959 by French police from an Algerian gun-running ring operating in the Sahara, it almost miraculously escaped re-melting and is now part of the Paris Mint collection. Considering that 51% of the coins are from the mint of Rome, 1935-7 vintage, Regoudy surmises that the hoard originated in Italian East Africa and eventually found its way to French North Africa in the wake of WW II military developments (1941-3). The profusely illustrated booklet includes a review of all restrikes of the MTT (18th-20th centuries) and of the countermarks, as well as a survey of the MTT circulation throughout the Islamic world, with special emphasis on the Red Sea, Horn of Africa and Persian Gulf areas. G.P.H.

New & Recent Publications

1. **Monnaies de Chine**, by François Thierry. 17 x 24 cm, 104 pp, 10 colour plates. ISBN 27177-1868-0. Published by the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris 1992. Price: 110 Francs.

This book, published to coincide with the exhibition "Monnaies de Chine" at the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris from 8 September to 6 December 1992, provides an overview of Chinese coinage from the time of the Shang Dynasty (18th-12th c. B.C.) until the beginning of the Republic in 1911. The most significant aspects of the coinage and currency of China are discussed in six chapters: early currency (cowries, knives and spades), the round coins, minting, silver and gold ingots, paper money, and the coinage struck elsewhere but which circulated in the Empire. Approximately 400 examples of coins and currency were included in the exhibition, most of them from the Bibliothèque Nationale's collection. All are fully described, with technical notes (the legends are transcribed and translated), and more than a hundred pieces are illustrated. A substantial introductory chapter provides an up-to-date survey of Chinese coinage; there is also a chapter on numismatic studies in China prior to the Republic, as well as a bibliography and several maps and chronological tables.

2. The following books are available from the Indian Books Centre, 40/5 Shakti Nagar, Delhi-110 007, India.

- i. B. N. Mukherjee: *Coins & Currency System in Gupta Bengal (c. AD 320-550)*, New Delhi, 1992, 100pp, 26 cm. US \$ 13.33.
- ii. *Rajputana Gazetteers - The Western Rajputana States Residency & the Bikaner Agency*, compiled by K. D. Erskine. Reprinted Gurgaon 1992. Two volumes. US \$ 33.33.
- iii. S. P. Upadhyaya: *Indo-Nepal Trade Relations: A Historical Analysis of Nepalis Trade with British India*, Jaipur, 1992. 287pp. US \$ 23.33.
- iv. Prayag Dayal: *Catalogue of the Coins of the Kings of Oudh*, New Delhi 1992, English & Persian. 78pp, 8 plates. US \$ 10.
- v. Muhammad Mohar Ali: *History of the Muslims of Bengal*, 1985.
Volume 1A - *Muslim Rule in Bengal (1203-1757)*, 683pp. US \$ 167.
Volume 1B - *Survey of Administration, Society & Culture*, pp.687-1087. US \$ 167.
- vi. *The Cyclopaedia of India: Biographical, Historical, Administrative, Commercial*. New Delhi 1992. Reprint. 3 volumes. US \$ 30.

3. **Records of the Hajj**: a documentary history of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

This important work, published in 10 volumes, reproduces authentic original documents, confidential reports, the correspondence of rulers and diplomats and numerous classic authorities on the Hajj experience, including early Arab historians.

Records of the Hajj is the culmination of several years of archival research and is published by Archive Editions, who are respected internationally for their contribution to research and scholarship in the sphere of documented history.

This edition will be published on 31 May 1993 @ £2495. All orders received prior to that date will be discounted by 25%, reducing the price to £1871 for this 10 volume, 6000 page collection. To secure your order, please write, fax or phone: David C. Tennant, Director of Marketing, Archive International Group, C.P. 719, 2001 Neuchatel, Switzerland. Tel: (41) 38 25 21 31/ Fax: (41) 38 24 79 27.

4. **TA NOMIEMATIKA XPONIKA - Numismatic Chronicles**

Hans Wilski would like to draw attention to a journal little known to ONS members: It is the periodical of the Hellenic Numismatic Society, Athens, Greece (HNS). The HNS was founded in 1970, and no. 1 of *Nom. Khron.* (as it is abbreviated in numismatic literature) was published in 1972. Its issue was interrupted in 1978 and restarted in 1988 with no. 7, since then it has been published annually. Although most of the articles in the *Nom. Khron.* are devoted to old Greek or Crusader coins, the reader will also find at least one article dealing with Ottoman coinage in each issue. All papers are printed in Greek and English language as well. The last issues contain:

No. 8 (1989): S. Tarinas: *The Countermarks of Plomari* (p.88).

No. 9 (1990): N. Roudometof: *The Rhodes Hoard* (p.77).

No. 10 (1991): K. M. MacKenzie: *Gold coins of Suleyman the Magnificent from the mint of Sidre Qapsi* (p.71).

No. 11 (1992): P. G. Kokkas: *Some Aspers of Suleyman I from the mint of Sidre Qapsi* (p. 66).

No. 12 (1993): An article about an Ottoman coin hoard found on Lesbos island will be included in the forthcoming issue of 1993.

For more information please contact the President of the Hellenic Numismatic Society, Mr A. P. Tzamalīs, P. Nirvana 19, 15231 Halandri (Athens), Greece.

5. **The Numismatic Chronicle**, volume 152, 1992, published by the Royal Numismatic Society, London, contains three articles of particular interest to ONS members:

- i. Early Muslim Coinage in East Africa: the Evidence from Shanga, by Helen Brown;
- ii. Tibetan Forgeries made in Calcutta, by Nicholas Rhodes;
- iii. The Debasement of the Republican Silver Coinage of Yunnan Province, by Richard Wright.

6. **Spink Numismatic Circular**, vol. CI, no. 1, February 1993 includes the following items:

- i. An Anonymous New Aksumite Silver Coin of the Early Christian Period, by B Juel-Jensen;
- ii. A New Mohur of the E.I.C. from the Arkot Mint, by K. Wiggins;
- iii. Preliminary Data on the Metallic Composition of some South East Asian Coinage as revealed by X-Ray Fluorescence, by T. D. Yih and J. de Kreek.

Vol. CI, no. 2, March 1993 includes:

- i. The Ottoman Copper Coins struck at Mocha, by S. Lachmann;
- ii. An Unusual Drachm of the Sasanian King Hormizd V or VI. by H. M. Malik.

Lists Received

- i. Stephen Album (P O Box 7386, Santa Rosa, Calif. 95407, USA) lists 93 & 94.
- ii. Persic Gallery (P O Box 10317, Torrance, Calif. 90505, USA) list 32 of Islamic, Indian, Baktrian & Central Asian Coinages.
- iii. Arlo Klein (P O Box 46775, Seattle, WA 98146, USA) a list of far eastern coinage.

Auction News

- i. The Australian Numismatic Co. (208 Sturt Street, Ballarat, Vic. 3350, Australia) have sent their extensive postal auction bid listing containing some 10,000 lots, including some oriental material. The closing bid date for sale 80 is 28 April 1993, but members wishing to be put on the mailing list can contact the company.
- ii. Anyone interested in central European tokens? If so, contact Dorotheum, Coin Department, attn: Mikael Beckers, Dorotheergasse 17, A-1010 Vienna, Austria, for a complimentary auction catalogue of 'one of the most significant and extensive token collections ever to be offered for public sale'. The collection comprises some 1500 tokens from the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1600-1918, and from modern Austria from 1919 onwards.

Corrigendum

In Newsletter 135, Bob Senior stated that the Baramati rupee he was publishing (Farrukhsiyar AH 1124 year 1) was the earliest known. Bernd Becker has pointed out that Maratha Mints & Coinage by K K Maheshwari & Ken Wiggins contains details of a coin of Baramati struck in the name of Shah 'Alam I in AH 1123.

The Metrology of Ghaznavid Silver Coinage

Robert Tye

Circumstances dictate that I ought to put some findings down in writing concerning the metrology of Ghaznavid silver coinage. I feel however that I should warn those with only a passing or casual interest in the coinage of medieval Afghanistan that this subject is a morass, and that my strugglings here are only likely to drag it deeper into the mire - indeed, perhaps they should quit the paper at this point.

The Ghaznavids struck a silver coinage in Eastern Afghanistan from approximately 994 to 1160 AD. The coinage was often copious, though rather base; it appears to have undergone a slow but sustained debasement throughout the era. Islamic dynasties to the West of the Ghaznavids struck only a trickle of silver coin over the same period - many scholars have attributed this to the lack of metallic resources (- though I would prefer to look for evidence of a decline in the institutions of coinage use.) The resources of metal for this coinage however are not in any doubt. The Ghaznavids controlled the silver mines of Panjhir and Anderaba, and also took control of vast stores of the metal from the looting of India by Mahmud (998-1030 AD).

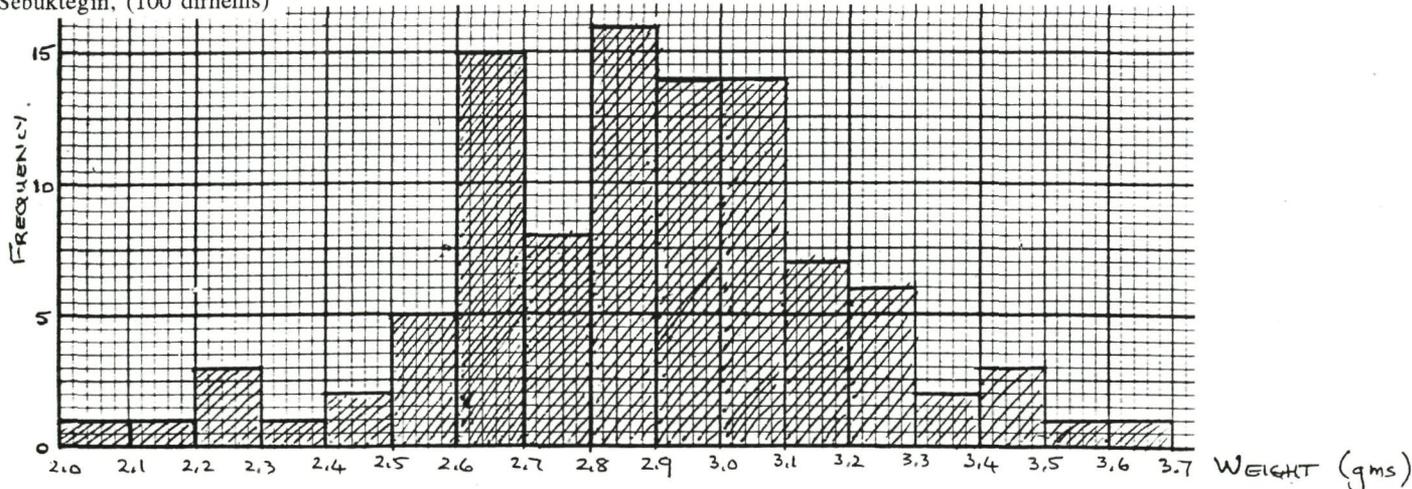
The basic coining unit for silver in Western Afghanistan changed from the Sasanid drachm of 4 grams to 2.9 grams (the reformed weight standard of 'Abd al-Malik from 698 AD) as Moslem forces took control. By late Abbasid or Saminid times this weight standard had clearly risen to around 3.2 grams or so - I must confess that I am not familiar enough with the literature to comment on the nature of the change. In Eastern Afghanistan - still outwith the Islamic world - a distinctive silver bull-and-horseman coinage appeared. The very early issues seem to retain a Sasanid weight of around 4 grams, but the majority of the issues weigh 3.1-3.2 grams. In all probability this derives from the Saminid standard. The first distinctive East Afghan Islamic dirhems were struck by the Ghaznavid Sebuktegin, and in all probability appeared very close to the date when the Hindu bull-and-horseman type was suppressed.

I am only aware of two brief comments in the literature relevant to the metrology of this East Afghan Islamic coinage. Deyell (Living without Silver p.73) proposes that the weight is nominally 2.3-3.2 grams, but that it was little controlled for the simple reason that coins circulated by weight, not count. He cites Alberuni ("Kitab-ul-Hind" trans. Sachau p.160) in support: "Hindus want the scale very little, because their dirhems are determined by number, not by weight, and their fractions too, are simply counted as so-and-so many falus. They weigh gold... as... ornaments, but not coined."

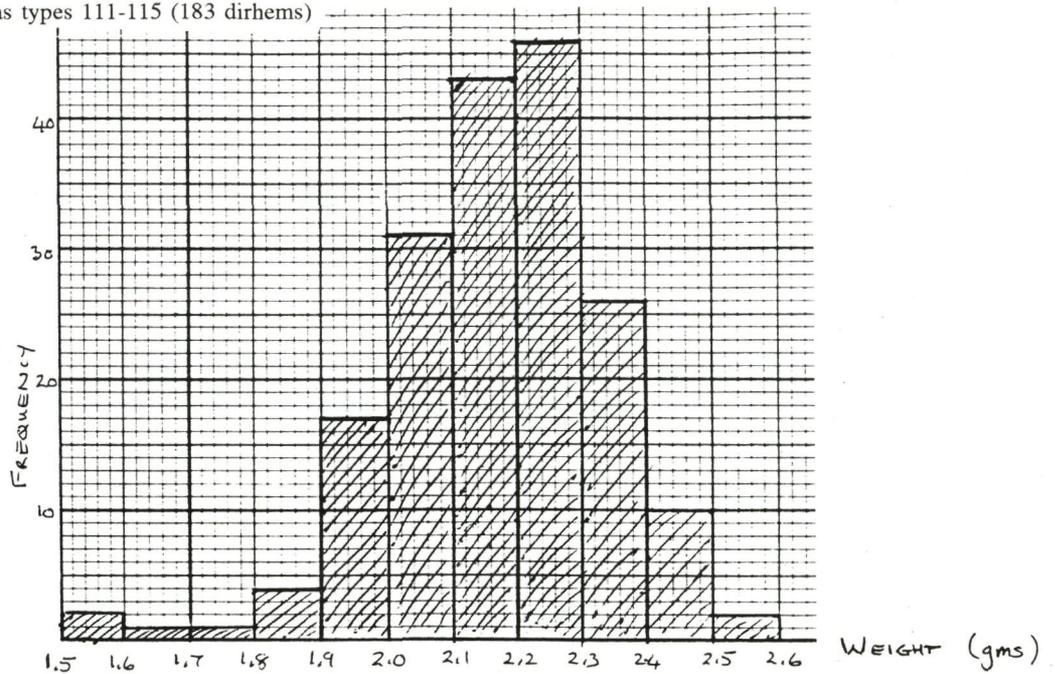
Mitchiner ("Multiple Dirhems of Medieval Afghanistan" p.5) discusses a different Islamic currency which appeared in central Afghanistan, a few score miles to the west, and a few decades earlier. He notes that these coins likewise have a wide variation in the weight standard but draws a completely different conclusion - that the coins circulated at a fixed value above their metal value: that they were a species of token.

A couple of years ago I spent a little time weighing the Ghaznavid silver in the Ashmolean collection - and came to the conclusion that as far as I could tell Deyell was correct with regard to the weight of these coins. An examination of the small samples of each type available there revealed little consistency in the metrology. However, two groups of Ghaznavid dirhems came my way in 1992 which looked remarkably internally homogeneous, and Bob Forrest very kindly (and very quickly!) weighed them and produced the following charts:

i. Sebuktegin, (100 dirhems)



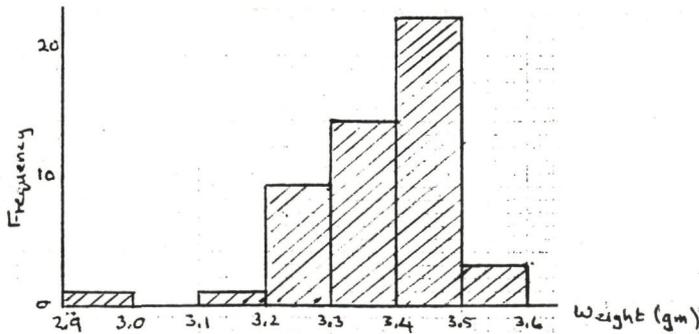
ii. Ibrahim Caliph al Qaim, Thomas types 111-115 (183 dirhems)



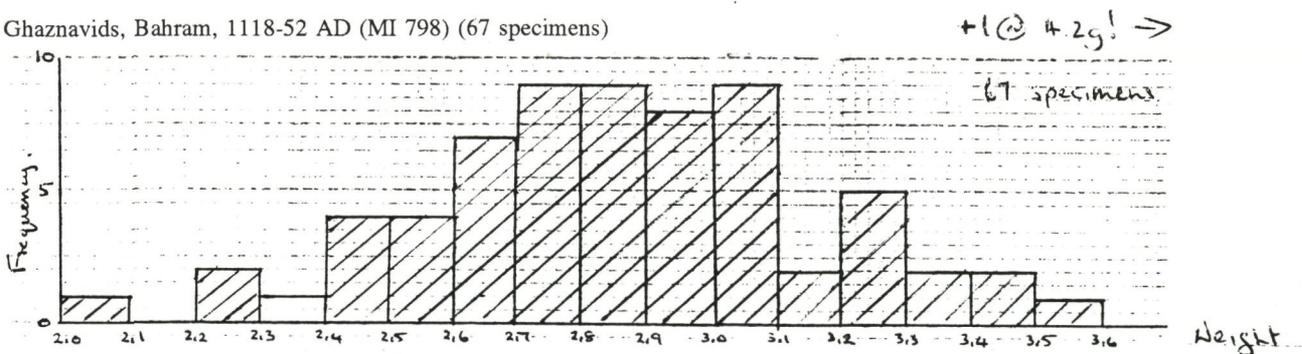
I found these results somewhat surprising. I had supposed the bull-and-horseman coins to be fairly well regulated in weight, and circulating by count, - and that Sebuktegin's issue would follow on both in weight standard and weight control, and that both factors would deteriorate with time. However Sebuktegin, at first sight, seems to have dropped the weight standard and allowed a near free for all with the weight regulation. In contrast, the later issue of Ibrahim (Thomas type 111-115) is surprisingly well regulated at around 2.25 grams. The evidence is of course not clear cut. It would be possible to see two different weight standards in the Sebuktegin chart, a (fairly) well regulated group at around 3.0 grams and another at around 2.65 grams. A first issue at the last bull-and-horseman standard, followed by a later reduced coinage perhaps? I hasten to add that I can see nothing in the fabric, (or on the very defective margins) to substantiate this.

Further kind assistance by Bob Forrest yielded the following charts for comparison purposes:

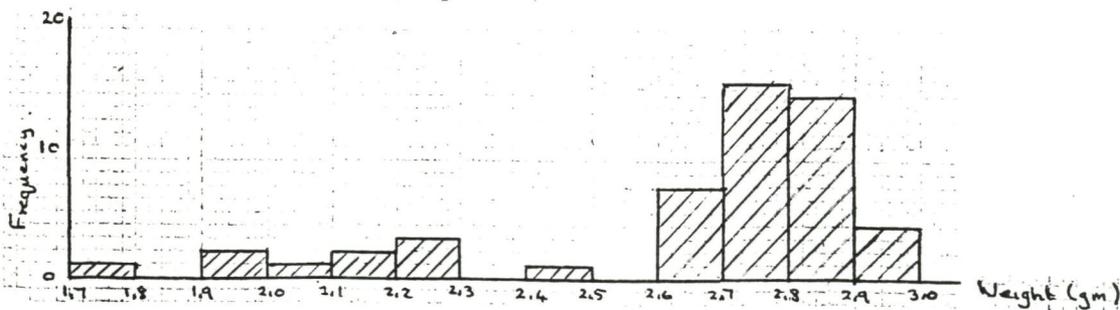
iii. Delhi Rajas, Chahadadeva, c.1172-91 AD (MN 449) (50 specimens)



iv. Ghaznavids, Bahram, 1118-52 AD (MI 798) (67 specimens)



v. Artukids, al Said Ghazi, 1239-60 AD (50 specimens)



These seem to show that Delhi issues were quite well regulated - as Deyell and Alberuni had led us to expect. The weight control of Ghaznavid dirhems achieved under Ibrahim has gone again under Bahram - which given the appearance of the coinage, and the standing of the Ghaznavid state itself at the time is not too surprising. The final group was weighed to show what a well regulated group of Artukid coins should look like. The coins showed little wear and looked homogeneous. I had assumed that, like the Syrian dirhems they copied, they would be well regulated at around 2.97 grams! (see Balog, "The coinage of the Ayyubids" p.36). I include them here as a further warning against presumption in this field.

Conclusions on Ghaznavid metrology

It appears that some Ghaznavid coinages were metrologically well regulated, but others were not. The question as to precisely when and where and to what extent they were regulated remains wide open.

Conclusions on Ghaznavid coinages

"Circulation" by weight is very convenient for the very wealthy - who can demand to withhold payment until a large balance is due (- a balance that is easier to weigh than to count)- and can afford to pay someone to carry his cash for him. It is extraordinarily inconvenient for the ordinary citizen paying just one or two coins - who would apparently have to carry a selection of specie around with him and spend half the morning weighing them to find one the right size (or perhaps - like a 20th century numismatist he would carry his change in individual envelopes - all marked with the weights?!). The small volumes of silver struck in contemporary Persia, by the Hammudids, Ziyarids, Kakwayids etc. may have been produced to circulate by weight, to feed the needs of such a wealthy elite, whilst the majority lived in some kind of regulated cashless economy. The relatively small volumes of pure silver coins of the later Afghan rulers - Ghorid and Khwarezm Shahs - may also have been struck to circulate by weight, for they both produced copious supply of base small change - clearly to be used by count.

In itself, a big diversity of weights in a coinage is not conclusive evidence of a circulation by weight, and Dr Mitchiner's suggestion - that some coins might be "tokens" (i.e. in part fiduciary issues) - is in some ways more attractive. It is quite obvious that a coinage can operate by count with little regard to the weight of individual coins. Many UK ONS members will recall that between 1947 and the mid 1960s coins with 92%, 50% and 0% silver content all circulated side by side without distinction - a situation only upset when inflation drove the token value of the coins below the bullion value of the best ones. I am afraid the vast majority of scholars seem to miss this point - accepting a simplistic misunderstanding of the well known statement by Gresham as a "Law", when it is clearly a prescription derived from a particular political philosophy.

Alberuni's comment to the effect that the Hindus counted their coins, whereas the early Ghaznavids had more need of the scales cannot be ignored. Clearly, in his time, coins were regularly weighed in transactions in Afghanistan - at least by Alberuni and his circle. However, the Ghaznavid silver coinage in Afghanistan differed from other coinages that circulated by weight in that it was copious, tended to debase, derived from a Hindu coinage circulating by count, circulated in a kingdom closely linked to the Hindu commercial system, and was apparently sometimes issued to a controlled weight standard.

The chief Moslem commercial centre in the East in this period was Nishapur, which was surely on a gold standard. The Islamic conquest of East Afghanistan would bring Kabul and Ghazni within its orbit, a conquest of silver by gold, which would likely devalue silver and give silver coin token status in its home market. (I am thinking here of processes similar to those in the British empire in the early 19th century, when the silver rupees minted by the great Moghuls for centuries rapidly collapsed in value against the international sovereign standard.) Alberuni and his circle may well have had the economic clout to demand payment by weight in gold, or silver. The man in the street however would clearly be inconvenienced by such moves, and might have agitated for, and got, fixed weight standards, at least at the time of Ibrahim.

It would be foolish to hypothesise further given the paucity of evidence. (I am sure some will think me foolhardy to have pushed on so far!) I hope at least that here I might encourage an interest in this thorny topic - and encourage scholars to approach it with an open mind.

Note from Bob Forrest: Weighings (i), (ii), and (iv) present a puzzling picture of Ghaznavid weight control, about which it seems difficult to draw any firm conclusions without further weighings of Ghaznavid hoards from a variety of periods. If any ONS member has access to hoard material and would like it weighed and graphed, then I would be happy to oblige - please write. Equally if anyone knows of any published results of this type, then I would be grateful to hear.

'Three Hills with River' - Emblem of an ancient South Indian dynasty

Wilfried Pieper

Recent years have brought to light a series of ancient Indian coins of which first Mitchiner published an example in 1979 (*Oriental Coins, Non-Islamic States & Western Colonies*, no. 801) erroneously attributing it to the south Indian dynasty of the Cheras of Kerala by misinterpreting the reverse type as the 'bow and arrow' symbol of the Cheras. Then Sohanlal Sisodia presented three more varieties of this coin (*Numismatic Digest*, vol. III, part II, 1979) and D. R. Reddy / P. S. Reddy four other varieties in vol. VII of the same journal in 1983.

All the published coins form a coherent series but they all differ in details. The basic obverse type is a standing horse with ancillary symbols before and/or above, while the reverse type is a combination of 3 triangular symbols in a row on top of the coin representing perhaps 3 hills with two sinuous parallel lines with dots inside like a river coming from the hills.

These square, uninscribed coins have all been described as die-struck although to me they look more like the products of the casting technique. Provenance, style and fabric make the attribution to south India more than probable and taking into account the absence of any inscription we may assume a time of emission somewhere between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD. The three traditional ruling families of this early time of the very south of India were the Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras and the numismatic finds of the region, apart from hoards of punchmarked coins and Roman coins, have principally been confined to these dynasties. An exception and interesting in this context is a hoard find of 173 lead cast coins, circular in shape, discovered in the Chengam taluk of the North Arcot district. A mention of this hoard is to be found in R. Vanaja's book 'Indian Coinage' of 1983. The author writes: "... These coins have two wavy lines and a few triangular symbols on the reverse probably representing a river and a mountain respectively and an anti-clockwise legend with an elephant goad on the reverse. On the basis of the palaeography of the Tamil-Brahmi legend these coins have been dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD. The legend reads 'Tinnan Etiran Chendan', the name of a chieftain of the Sangam period..." It is certainly justified to see a connection between these hoard coins and those being the subject of this article, regarding both as emissions of one and the same dynasty, taking the 'Three hills with river' motif as the dynastic emblem of that dynasty. New finds, further publications and a detailed study of the mentioned hoard could support this assumption.

Here I am presenting a few more varieties of these coins from my collection, the provenance of which unfortunately is unknown.



Metal: copper
Technique: cast
Weight: 2.8 gm
Size: 1.8 x 1.6 cm



Metal: copper
Technique: cast
Weight: 2.9 gm
Size: 1.9 x 1.7 cm



Metal: copper
Technique: cast
Weight: 3.0 gm
Size: 2.0 x 1.7 cm



Metal: copper
Technique: cast
Weight: 3.2 gm
Size: 1.8 x 1.6 cm



Metal: copper
Technique: cast
Weight: 2.3 gm
Size: 1.7 x 1.3 cm

Some rare coins of the Mughal, Shah Jehan I Dr B. Becker

i. A mohur of Balkh mint

The coin is a mohur in the name of Shah Jehan of the so-called square area type with interesting double dates: 1056 AH in the margin right to the Kalima and 1057 AH to the right of the mint name Balkh on the lower margin of the reverse. The weight is 10.93 gr.

Shah Jehan as a fascinated reader of Babur-Nama was driven by the desire to regain Samarkand and the Ferghana valley for the Mughals and when local unrest rose in Transoxania he saw a chance for a successful intervention. So he gave orders for a military campaign to the north east.

In spring 1646 AD (1056 AH) the twenty-two year old prince Murad Bakhsh marched with an army of 50,000 soldiers as far as Badakhshan and Balkh - about 250 miles northeast of Kabul. But after a successful summer campaign conquering the country almost without a blow, Murad wanted to stay in the warm climate of India for the coming winter. Shah Jehan forbade him to leave the command post and ordered him to remain with the armed forces. Murad disobeyed and left. The prince was disgraced, deprived of rank and government and forbidden the court.

Shah Jehan turned the command over to prince Aurangzeb who had impressed him with his ability to calm the unrest in the province of Gujerat one year earlier. Aurangzeb arrived at the theatre of war in spring 1647 AD (1057 AH) but despite great efforts there was no long-lasting military success for him against the permanent guerilla attacks of the Uzbeks and Hazara enemy.

From the very beginning Aurangzeb was handicapped by the smallness of his fighting forces. Murad had marched into Balkh with 50,000 men but after the conquest a greater part of the army had been recalled. So Aurangzeb had to fight battles with less than 25000 soldiers while the enemy was meanwhile a nation in arms and outnumbered the Mughals by three to one.

Very late in the autumn Aurangzeb withdrew the imperial army to Kabul over the snowy mountain passes of Hindukush losing a considerable part of the forces by starvation, unusual early cold winter and consistent enemy attacks. This 1646/47 campaign cost the Mughal treasury a fortune for practically no result and no profit. The dream of gaining the homeland of Babur was over and given up forever.

It seems obvious that this coin was struck during this campaign at Balkh in present day Afghanistan.

Another unusual Mughal coin which was probably struck during the same period as the Balkh mohur is this mintless and dateless (larger parts of this coin are flat and worn off) Shahrukhi or Tanka struck in the name of Shah Jehan. Weight is 4.44 gr. It seems possible that this coin was struck by order of Nazar Muhammad Khan of Balkh, professing submission to the emperor.

1. J. Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb.
2. B. Gascoigne, Die Grossmoguln.



ii. An unrecorded square rupee of Shah Jehan

The hitherto published square rupees of the Mughal Shah Jehan are of the following mints: Ahmedabad, Akbarabad, Multan and Surat. Here is another rupee dated 1040 AH, regnal year 4 of Lahore mint. The weight is 10.92 gr. probably caused by considerable wear during circulation. The coin follows the pattern of KM 227 but struck on a square flan

Obv: Kalima in circle and AH date.

Rev: Inscription in four lines and regnal year.



iii. Closing the gap between Agra and Akbarabad

In 1038 AH regnal year 2 Shah Jehan gave the order to change the name of the city of Agra into Akbarabad in commemoration of his grandfather Jalal ud din Akbar. According to numismatic evidence this change must have taken place between month one Farwardin and month 4 Tir. A rupee dated 1038/2 Farwardin of Agra is known from the former collection of R. C. Senior, and in the Lahore museum catalogue a rupee is listed of 1038/2 Tir of Akbarabad (coin no. 1238). This gap between Farwardin and Tir is now narrowed by another coin: a rupee of 1038 Khurdad of Dar ul Khilafat Akbarabad. The weight is 11.24 gr.

New Type of Shivarai & a Coin Die

S. D. Godbole

Shivarai is a copper coin issued by Shivaji in 1674 AD at the time of his coronation. The coinage has many varieties due to the extensive minting in the Peshwa's territories. Recently a new Shivarai coin and a die have come to light from Pune, Western Maharashtra region, following exploration in and around Pune. The two specimens were discovered by Mr. M. A. Bokil a local coin collector. The details of the coin are as follows

Weight 15.4 grams, copper.

Diameter 2.2 cm, thickness 0.3 cm.

Obv: In circle Nagari letters SHIVRAJ

Rev: In circle letters CHATRAPATI



One can easily observe that the letter Ra on the obverse is depicted like the letter Ra of Modi script. This variation is usually found on Shivarai coins of the later Satara rulers. So considering the scarcity of the coin, it may have been struck at some special event by one of the later Maratha rulers.

The coin die may be described as follows

Shape - oblong, weight 25 gms.

Metallic content uncertain.

Letters engraved SRI RAJA SIVA



Though innumerable Shivarai coins are available in Maharashtra, coin dies are not reported. So these two specimens are important additions to the Maratha coinage.

Spurious Goanese Xerafins of 1650

Ken Wiggins

Collectors of Indo-Portuguese coins who possess silver xerafins of Goa (KM 225) dated 1650 should take a close look at them.

Whilst in Goa recently I encountered a number of these xerafins struck on Indian coins of Maratha mintage. The coins used as flans were mainly Maratha rupees of the Azamnagar type (fig. 1), the original type of which was first struck early in the reign of Muhammad Shah, Mughal emperor AD 1719-1748, probably about 1725 (figs. 2 & 3). I have also seen one struck on a Goa portrait type rupee of the early 19th century and on a kori coin of Kutch dated S. 1914 (AD 1857) (fig. 4). The examples shown here are rather poor attempts at overstriking but when done properly and the design of the under-coin is completely effaced the coin could be taken at a glance to be a genuine xerafin.

I do not know whether the die used to make these spurious coins is an original one or whether it was specially made. I have not had the opportunity to compare the above coins with known genuine xerafins of 1650 but they seem to differ when compared with some illustrations that I have been able to find. Their weight varies between 10.70 and 11.10 grams; somewhat heavier than the genuine xerafins of 1650.

I have no information as to when these pieces were made or what was the intention of making them. If it was to deceive collectors then the scheme would not have been particularly successful for the coins, when examined closely, can easily be seen to be rather suspicious overstrikes. My first thought on seeing them was that the Marathas had been busy overstriking xerafins in order to supplement their own coinage, but this proved not to be the case.



An Unpublished Coin from Bhutan

N G Rhodes

Obv: Mongoose, seated left under a tree and spitting pearls into a bowl. The pearl-spouting mongoose is a typical attribute of Vaisravana, the god of wealth, symbolising generosity overcoming the snakes of avarice.

Rev: Field divided into nine compartments containing Buddhist symbols, as follows

top left	Rhinoceros horn
top centre	Dorje, or thunderbolt
top right	Tibetan book
centre left	Lozenge, a symbol of victory
centre centre	Swastika
centre right	Gold coin, signifying wealth
lower left and right	Two elephant tusks
lower centre	Uncertain four-lobed symbol

Diam. 23.5 mm, weight 3.3 g.



The machine struck copper coin illustrated above was acquired in Kalimpong in 1974 among a number of Bhutanese coins, and the design is consistent with it being a new type of Bhutanese coin. The field divided into nine compartments is found on several Bhutanese coin types, and the symbols are typical of Bhutanese Buddhist iconography. The weight of 3.3 g is lighter than the paisa of 1928/30 (Y1 - 4.9 g) and heavier than that of 1951 (Y3 - 2.9 g), so an intermediate date seems appropriate, although the standard of striking does not seem quite up to the standard of the Calcutta mint. Furthermore, the design contains no inscription or symbol

indicative of the secular authority of the Bhutanese king or government. Accordingly, a private production seems most likely, and it was probably struck by a local metal worker in Bhutan or, more likely in a neighbouring Indian border town such as Kalimpong, for a Bhutanese customer.

As so few specimens of this type have turned up, one could ask whether it ever circulated as a coin, or whether it had a purely religious function, but this question is very difficult to answer. The economy of Bhutan was largely non-monetary until the 1960s, so the coins that did circulate were used as much for religious donations as to make normal purchases. The government did not retain a monopoly over the striking of coins, and many were probably struck initially for religious purposes, but were also intended to, and did, circulate alongside other coins and were readily accepted as currency by the local people. I therefore believe that such religious amulets can, and should, be included in any coin collection.

Batavia Cash Coins

Arjan van Aelst, Erasmus University Rotterdam

We still know very little about the local currencies of Java in the 17th-century. The records of the Dutch East India Company contain some reference to this matter, although we cannot derive conclusive evidence from it regarding which coinage is meant. There is sufficient material however to provide a basis for further numismatic research.

In 1633 the Company found out that the lead they sold in Batavia to a local Chinese merchant was resold to nearby Banten at a 50% profit. In Banten the lead was cast into 'Javanese cash or picis' that were sold in large quantities along the coast of northern Java and southern Borneo. The Company saw a profitable trade opportunity and attracted Chinese 'picis-makers' from Banten, Cheribon and Japara. They received the exclusive right to cast and export the coins in Batavia. In return for the monopoly they had to pay a higher price for the lead. In 1636 the lead-contract was sold to a Chinese headman for 1200 reals, indicating the considerable profits that could be made in the picis sales. These profits attracted competitors. By 1637 the English East India Company was selling lead for coining purposes in Banten and Japara (Java), Jambi and Palembang (Sumatra), Martapura (Borneo) and Makassar (Sulawesi). This of course affected the export opportunities for the coins made in Batavia. Half of the picis-makers had to be fired and the lead-price was lowered. The Chinese contractor in his turn had to sell the picis at a lower price, without reducing the weight of the coins.

The next year, however, competition from English and Danish lead-imports forced down the price in Batavia. Furthermore Asian traders imported cheap tin from Thailand to Japara.

By 1641 Batavia had lost the price-battle and the casting of lead picis was stopped. The Chinese in Batavia now turned to producing 'copper coins, current in Banten' (although the lead picis for Banten were not completely abandoned. In 1646 the sultan complained about the enormous amount of forged 'Banten picis' that flooded his town. Accordingly the Dutch forbade the production in Batavia of these 'lead Banten picis, cast with the king's mark'.)

So far we have only circumstantial evidence, we know only that lead picis were cast in Batavia in the 1630's. Since the price of the lead and the price of the picis is mentioned in some instances, however, we might compute a weight-indication of the coins. The number of picis that could be bought for one silver Real increased from 4200 in 1636, 6000 in 1637, 10000 in 1638, 12000 in 1639 to 14000 in 1640. This price was composed of the purchase-price of the lead, the wages for the workmen, fuel for the ovens and a profit margin. The profit margin was apparently gone in 1641, the lead price was then 6.5 Reals per picol (about 60 kg). From this information we can compute the maximum amount of lead per picis at 0.66 gram. The lead was more expensive in earlier years (9 Reals in 1633, 12 Rs. in 1634, 15 Rs. 1636, 12.5 Rs. in 1637, 9 Rs. in 1638) but the coins were more expensive as well. The maximum weight of a coin must have been under a gram during these years too.

When we add up the total amount of lead the Dutch Company sold between 1633-1641, we arrive at 411 tons of metal that was cast into picis. The total number of these light coins must have been between 500 and 1000 million! When we consider the whole area where this money was produced and a larger number of years we arrive at milliards of early 17th-century lead picis. Where have all these coins gone? It is to be hoped that a combined effort of numismatists, archaeologists and historians will make an identification of the 'Batavia-cash' possible.

Note. These remarks are based on information in: W.P. Coolhaas: "Generale missiven van Gouverneurs-generaal en raden aan heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie" part I (1610-1638) (Den Haag, 1960) and part II (1639-1655) (Den Haag, 1964); J.A. van der Chijs: "Nederlandsch-Indisch plakaatboek, 1602-1811" (Den Haag, 1885-1900) part I (1602-1642) and part II (1642-1677).

A New Chastana Coin

R C Senior

The base coins of Chastana are now known in several types and denominations but the most attractive is still the type with standing horse obverse. I have several examples of this type, mostly rectangular, and ranging from 25mm diameter to 9mm. They have a corrupt Greek legend on the obverse and Brahmi reverse. One tiny specimen c. 6.5mm. diameter is round and seems to have a kharosthi legend on the obverse. Now a larger specimen has surfaced weighing 2.1 gms and measuring 17mm in diameter. It seems to be made of bronze or possibly billon. The obverse has a standing horse to the right and a beribboned spear before. Around is the legend in kharosthi reconstructed as follows:

5

Γ Ε Χ Σ Τ Ι Α Σ Ο Π Α Τ Ρ Α Σ Α Γ Γ Υ Γ Ν Ο Σ Τ Ε [] Ι Ψ Ω Ν Ο

३५ ५ ६ १ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७



It reads: Rana Mahakshatrapa(?) putra nasa. The letter(?) after mahakshatrapa is uncertain but probably the beginning of Ghsamotika's name, after which would come putrasa ('s son) and then the name and titles of Chastana. On the reverse, the surface has flaked but parts of the legend are very clear. A six arched Caitya with wavy line below has a crescent on the left and star on the right. The legend begins at 12 o'clock and reads: Rajno Mahaksatrapasa Ghsamotikaputrasa (?) (?)5 spaces - Castanasa.

The interesting thing about this reverse is that it must have contained Castana's titles, possibly Rajno Ksatrapasa? Since the coin illustrates that Ghsamotika's elevation from Ksatrap to Mahaksatrap had already taken place, the coin must have been issued rather late in Chastana's reign.

"Silk Road Coins: The Hirayama Collection" - a display at the British Museum's Coin & Medal Department was duly opened on 1 April by Professor Ikuo Hirayama in the presence of Dr Robert Anderson, the Museum's director, and His Excellency the Japanese Ambassador to Britain. A lavishly illustrated catalogue in English and Japanese has been produced to accompany the display, which continues until 31 May 1993.