

ONS 50th Anniversary Conference Draft Programme

Synopses

1 John Deyell (Independent scholar)

Indo-Sasanian coinages: interpretive challenges and new ways forward

For half a millennium after the demise of Gupta rule, the dominant money-forms of north and central India were Indo-Sasanian silver coins. The many varieties of this series have attracted a great deal of study. While some questions remain, the broad perspectives of production and circulation are by now well-established.

Quite unexpectedly, a major interpretive departure was recently proposed. This presentation explores the evidence offered and finds the new proposal untenable. But the discussion does open up other, perhaps more radical, interpretive options, to understand the nature and scope of this great imperial coinage.

2 Dai Jianbing (Hebei Normal University) Chinese coin culture

Synopsis

I would like to briefly introduce the trend of Chinese numismatics. One is the research on the development of domestic coins, which pays more attention to the relevant unearthed materials and archives, especially the application of foreign archives in modern times, for example the Han tomb unearthed in Nanchang recently, and many of our colleagues researching the original Western archives of modern mints, especially silver coin and copper coin mint, etc. The second trend is that young scholars pay more and more attention to the study of coins in the Belt and Road-related countries. The research on the coins of countries along the Silk Road is becoming a hot topic in the field of Chinese coins, and a large number of young scholars have emerged. The third trend is that some young scholars have strengthened their research on the coins and currency history of other countries. For example, we have a representative website called maoyanco.com (Cat's eyes' view of coins, as site focussed on overseas coins). Fourth, in the field of currency history, some Chinese scholars have begun to translate and pay close attention to the study of foreign currency history. Recently, a large number of related works have been published. Fifthly, China's numismatic research has finally entered the formal academic subject field. Hebei Normal University has the first doctoral degree programme in numismatics in China, which is an overall development direction, we are also willing to further strengthen ties with the monetary circles of

various countries in the world, so as to take International monetary research to a new level. Thank you.

3 François Thierry (Bibliothèque nationale, Paris)

The circulation and use of the bamboo tallies in Jiangsu Province by the light of the Tongcheng Company issues

After the fall of the Taiping Empire, the Jiangsu Province was in a disastrous economic and monetary situation. The authorities being unable to provide a reliable currency for daily trade, the local economic communities were constrained to find unofficial solutions. Among different types of necessity currencies, the bamboo tallies were playing a great role in the Jiangsu province local monetary exchanges. In big cities or in small towns, shops, local banks and trading houses issued bamboo tallies with face value in legal cash (*zhiqian*), then in ten cash copper coins (*tongyuan*) and at last in silver currency (*dayang*). The first one seems to be a local bank of Wuxi county in late Tong Zhi era; the use of this kind of currency spread in the region and became very popular; many companies and shops issued their own tallies struck with the name of the issuer and the location.

The Tongcheng Trading House, established in the Suzhou walled city, was a wealthy company involved in the trade of Southern China products. In the early years of Guang Xu (1875-1908), the Company issued several types of bamboo tallies quite similar to those of the other local issuers. The facial value was given in *zhiqian* or in *zukaqian*, for an amount of 100 cash and 200 cash; the shape of each face value tally was slightly different with a view to avoiding illiterate people's confusion of 100 and 200 cash tallies. But there were also some differences between the tallies issued by the three different offices of the Tongcheng Company from 1884 and 1894.

In the second half of the last decade of the 19th century, the Board of the Company started to reduce to 50% the face value of its 200 cash tallies by overstriking the former issues. That is an exceptional case in the Jiangsu tallies, although the practice of overstriking is well attested for the account unit or company names. This change could be probably a consequence of the fall of the value of silver versus cash coins in the last years of the 19th century. According to the dates on the tallies, the issues stopped in the beginning of the 20th century.

4 François Joyaux (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, Paris)

Cataloguing the ancient Annamese private cash

In Annam, private money was a very important part of the money supply at many times, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the vast majority of cases, it is impossible to date it. Furthermore, the distinction between private coinage and counterfeiting is almost impossible. All these obstacles make the cataloguing of these currencies very difficult.

In Western languages, the only catalog entirely devoted to them is that of Toda, but a certain number of these currencies are also listed in the catalogs of Schroeder,

Novak, Thierry or Hartill. In fact the most detailed catalogs are Japanese, in particular the *Annan Senpu* by Miura Gosen (1963), the *Annan Shosote Aensen Senpu* (2003), and the *Anasen Nyumon: Terui Senko* by Tominaga Masayoshi (2010). Not knowing the dates of these coins, these catalogs classified them, when they did, either according to their nianhao (年號 *niên hiệu*) (Chinese, Annamese, pseudo-nianhao), or according to their style (手) for what is Japanese catalogs.

In fact, none of these catalogs is satisfactory. All are very incomplete (Miura Gosen being the most complete). The categorization of *nianhao* is easy, but does not lead to any conclusion regarding the chronology. Finally, the classification by styles is complicated for a Westerner, especially since there are a large number of intermediate styles, and does not lead either to any precise conclusion as to the chronology.

The cataloging which we present at the time of this conference admits our total ignorance as for the chronology of these currencies, but gathers the totality of the private currencies which are known to us, including the coins in lead and tin so far very little catalogued.

We adopted a classification quite simply alphabetical, by the first letter of the *nianhao* or pseudo-*nianhao* transcribed into pinyin. In addition, for each *nianhao*, we classified the currencies by types, according to five criteria: -the legend of the currency on the obverse (*nianhao* and nature of the currency)

-the nature of the metal (copper, zinc, lead, tin)

-the spelling of the legend of the obverse (regular, sigillary, official, cursive, in

grass, heterodox, melee)

-the direction of reading the legend (cross or circle).

- the module and the weight (normal, small)

This catalog brings together 203 *nianhao* or pseudo-*nianhao*. The combination of these 203 *nianhao* or pseudo-*nianhao* and the 5 criteria defining each type leads to a total of 521 different types. Obviously, the varieties existing for each type are not catalogued: this would result in thousands of references.

It goes without saying that we do not pretend to have catalogued all the private currencies issued in Annam over the centuries. This catalog must be completed as and when discoveries are made.

We thank our friend Craig Greenbaum for the help he has given us, especially for the examination of the Japanese catalogs.

5 Amiteshwar Jha (Indian Institute for Research in Indian Numismatics)

Title: to be confirmed

Synopsis: to be confirmed

6 Pankaj Tandon (Boston University)

The coins in the name of Chandragupta

When Gupta coins were first discovered, numismatists naturally thought to attribute the coins in the name of Chandragupta (CG) to one of the two kings of that name known from inscriptions. In particular, coins of the so-

called "King and Queen" type, which depict CG with his wife Kumaradevi, were naturally assigned to CG I (who indeed married the Lichchhavi princess Kumaradevi), and the rest were assigned to CG II. Subsequently, John Allan proposed that the King and Queen type should actually be assigned to Samudragupta, on the basis of style considerations, but that proposal continues to be challenged. More recently, some of the coins assigned to CG II have been reassigned by P.L. Gupta and Ellen Raven to a later king of the same name, CG III. Most recently, Sanjeev Kumar has proposed a radical reattribution of more coins from CG II to CG I on grounds of their weight. In this paper, I reexamine all of these proposals using not just stylistic considerations, but by applying statistical techniques on the weights of a large sample of Gupta coins. I conclude that CG I did not issue any of the known gold coins and that a large group of coins assigned by others to CG II should in fact be reassigned to CG III, more than doubling the output of that king. This exercise changes our understanding of the importance of CG III, who appears by all counts to be none other than Purugupta, the king whose "missing" coins remain a major mystery in Gupta numismatics.

7 Ehsan Shavarebi (Münzkabinet, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

From Bishapur to Vienna: A hoard of late Sasanian drachms?

In 2021, the Coin Cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna acquired a rich collection of ancient oriental coins (Sasanian, Arabo-Sasanian, Tabaristan, Kushan, Iranian Huns, Western Turks, and Gupta). A group of drachms of the Sasanian king Khusro II (r. 591–628) from this collection, all minted at Bishapur (BYŠ) and mostly preserved in mint condition, seem to have been part of a hoard. The numerous die-links between these coins may provide us with a better understanding of the activity of the mint of Bishapur under Khusro II. The provenance of this 'hoard' is unfortunately unknown. However, given its composition and the physical condition of the coins, it may be speculated that the 'hoard' originates from Bishapur or a neighbouring area in southern Iran.

8 Aleksandr Naymark (Hofstra, University New York)

Immobilized types in Sogdian coinage

Sogdian coinage is known for its long lines of immobilized types which often stretch for centuries and in one case as far as six hundred years. Scholars tend to call all these coins imitations and base on them various conclusions about the nature of Sogdian economy and state. Yet the historical conditions, both of the country and of its broader environment, as well as the forms of monetary exchange known to the Sogdians in different times by no means could be brought under one heading. During its fourteen hundred year history Sogdiana was a dark corner of the Near Eastern world, a merchant emporium controlling the flow of goods on the Silk Road,

and a thriving economy under control of foreign imperial power. The talk examines several specific cases in monetary history of Sogdiana (3rd century BCE to 8th century CE), showing that the “imitational mode” could appear in coinage as a result of very different conditions and often “covered” completely different phenomena that literally have nothing to do with each other. The talk will touch upon coins of Sogdiana in post-Hellenistic epoch (3rd-1st centuries BCE), Stagnation period (2nd century CE), Hephtalite rule (second half of the 5th to mid 6th century), the time of the First Turkic Kaganate (second half of the 6th century CE), the time of Arab conquest (first half of the 8th century) and the early Abbasid epoch (8th – early 9th century).

9 Stefan Heidemann (University of Hamburg)

Mints and Urban Dynamics – Baghdād, al-Raqqā, and Other Places.

The large cities of the ‘Abbāsīd empire, such as Baghdād, al-Rayy, or al-Raqqā, were not cities in the western (Max Weber’s) sense, but rather have to be understood as agglomerations of cities. In the twelfth century, the Ḥanafī scholar al-Kāsānī defines a city as where we find one congregational mosque, reflecting earlier debates by Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad al-Shaybānī. Large populated cities, such as Baghdād, are naturally structured by several different urban entities each with a congregational mosque. These cities have thus their own legal quality as *miṣr* (pl. *amṣār*). Baghdād, consists of the palace city, *Madīnat al-Salām*, Karkh, al-Ruṣāfa, and other entities. Al-Raqqā, the residence city of Ḥārūn al-Rashīd, is an agglomeration of al-Raqqā proper, al-Rāfiqa, the garrison city, and of the palatial area in the north of both. For al-Rayy we have two names of al-Rayy and al-Muḥammadiyya. This list could be easily extended.

Numismatics can help us to understand those urban dynamics. As an extremely versatile material source, coins can be used for more than economic and political history or for archaeological stratigraphy and settlement pattern. As a document with up to 150 words, these texts can offer us information about the legal and administrative structure of cities. Mint names used on coins are the contemporary official name of the place where the coin was issued. To corroborate the numismatic source with the literary sources for urban history, we have to decode the semantics of the naming of mint places on coins. Sometimes the mint of the provincial capital is identified by the name of the province as in the case of the mint *Ifrīqiya*, which is *Qayrawān*, or the mint of *Fārs* that is *Shīrāz*. We cannot always rule out the honorific use of a name for the entire urban agglomeration, for example *al-Mubāraka* for *Tāhart* in North Africa. However, we often get a precise name of an urban entity within larger urban agglomerations. These names reveal sometimes the structure of that agglomeration. There is no mint called Baghdād before the Mongols. The main mint was established within a city of its own: the palace city of *Madīnat al-Salām*. We find also other names of locations within the agglomeration Baghdād on coins. We find two operating mints in the twin cities al-Raqqā and al-Rāfiqa, seemingly within each of the two cities. Based on these

findings, it may be proposed that in the case of other cities, where we have less sufficient archaeological records, such as al-Rayy or *Iṣfahān*, but more than one mint name, the mint names denote urban entities within the agglomeration. The legal model for that can be found in Ḥanafī law, but usually the law reflects positively a reality. Here the city *Ktesiphon* or *al-Madā’* in may offer a key for the understanding.

10 Sanjay Garg (National Archives of India, New Delhi)

Badshah as the Caliph: Probing caliphal pretensions of the Mughal rulers of India

A majority of the early Turk rulers of India (1206-1398 CE) – The Mamluks, the Khiljis and the Tughluqs - accepted the nominal suzerainty of the Caliph as part of their state polity and prided themselves as being the ‘helper/ right hand/ deputy of the Commander of the Faithful’ (*Nāsir/ yamīn/ nāyab-i Amīr ul-Mominīn*). Their coins bear testimony to this symbolic relationship between the Caliphate and the Sultanate of Delhi. However, during the rule of the two non-Turkic dynasties that assumed power in Delhi, one after another following the fall of the house of the Tughluqs, namely the Sayyids (AH 817-855/ 1414-51 CE), and the Lodis (1451-1526 CE), the relations between the Sultans of Delhi and the Caliph were completely redefined.

Even before the Mughals wrested political power in India from the last scion of the Lodi dynasty (1526 CE), the mantle of Caliphate had been securely appropriated by the Ottoman ruler, Sultan Selim I (1470-1520 CE). The Mughal rulers, however, ‘regarded the caliphal pretensions of the Turks [Ottomans] with cautious ambivalence.’ (Shashi S. Sharma, *Caliphs and Sultans: Religious Ideology and Political Praxis*, Delhi, 2017: 3.)

While a number of Muslim rulers contemporary to the Mughals, such as the Shaybanids in Turkistan, the Gujarat Sultanate in India (1536), and the Morocco Sultanate (1579) professed their allegiance (*bai‘at*) to the Ottoman Caliph-Sultan, the Safavids in Iran and the Mughals in India, continually remained quite indifferent to the temporal authority claimed by the Ottoman rulers. At the same time, to rival the claim of the Ottoman rulers, some of the Mughal rulers even sought to appropriate to themselves the position of the supreme leader of the Muslim world as per the Sunni/ Ḥanafī traditions. Whether these Mughal rulers acted ‘to assert their political and religious authority vis-à-vis the Turkish Sultan for reasons of imperial pride [emphasis added]’ (Sharma 2017: 3), or sought legitimacy in Islamic theory which permitted a ruler the privilege of an imam in the territories under their control, has been a subject of debate. This paper seeks to enter this debate from numismatic view point.

11 Richard Morel (British Library, London)

A biography in banknotes: The life and career of Alfred Joseph Bull, 1876-1950

Largely unknown within the numismatic community, Alfred Joseph Bull was a polymath and security printing advisor employed by the India Office, Crown Agents, Bank of England and the Treasury. As a group these organisations were responsible for the production of paper currencies across the United Kingdom and most of the British Empire. Bull's contributions to in this field were incredibly significant. Paying particular focus on his work for the paper currencies of the East African Coast, Indian Ocean, South Asia, Southeast Asia and Hong Kong this paper will provide a brief summary of Bull's life and career. It will then go on to assess his impact on Asian paper currencies as well as contextualising them within a wider imperial setting.

12 Michael Mitchiner (Independent scholar)

Bombay tolas

Tolas were stamped pieces of metal with a stated gold, or silver, purity and with a stated weight denominated in tolas. They were a form of private currency circulating within the Bombay business community, particularly among the bullion dealers and jewellers.

Tolas were popular among the business community in Bombay for nearly a century. They were introduced as a reaction to the British Government's creation of a tax on paper hundis in the aftermath of the suppression of the East India Company in 1858. The hundi was a handwritten promise to pay. Hundis were widely used in business circles, which made the new tax especially unwelcome. Tolas would retain their popularity until the Indian Government decimalised bullion transactions in 1952, although their role had changed by that time.

Many makers and retailers of tolas ran businesses concentrated in Bombay's Zaveri Bazaar. Less than half a mile long, Zaveri Bazaar was, and still is, Bombay's focus for dealing in precious metals – principally gold and silver, both bullion and jewellery.

One factor to consider in the context of bullion dealing was the small number of accurate scales available in the business community for weighing heavy weights of bullion. During the second half of the nineteenth century, only two private companies in Bombay possessed heavy weight bullion scales of accepted accuracy. Both companies had premises in the Zaveri Bazaar, Gordhandas Ranchordas Bhagat and the Bombay Bullion Association.

Silver bullion was traded as pure silver. During the second half of the nineteenth century, pure silver had a titre of 994 to 996. This was the period of the Jodhpur ingots. Improvements in refining technique led to a standard silver purity of 999 from the early twentieth century, and until the present day.

The economic reason for introducing tolas circa 1860

One of the first financial changes introduced by the British Government after suppression of the East India Company in 1858, was the introduction of a revenue tax on financial instruments. The financial instruments included paper hundis. The standard rate for the new tax was 1 anna per 100 rupees value of the hundi.

Although hundis remained in use for transacting business at a distance, a new tax exempt vehicle was soon introduced for making balancing payments within Bombay's densely packed business community.

The transition from ingots to tolas was technically simple. The ingots of variable weight, like those of the Jodhpur Sarrafas (Fine 9940), were replaced by tolas of standard weight and guaranteed purity. No tax was payable. Bombay's new tolas were in use by 1864. Meanwhile in Calcutta, businesses continued to use hundis, despite the new tax. Only a few Bengali gold tolas are known, and no silver tolas. The gold tola weighed 11.664 grams, the same as the gold mohur. The silver tola had the same weight.

Metal purities and sizes of Tolas

The silver purities of 994 and 996 prevailed during the second half of the nineteenth century and the details were shown on tolas – commonly with the final digits stamped after the bullion batch had been assayed. By the early twentieth century, a silver purity of 999 could regularly be achieved and it became normal practice to include the numbers '999' on the die, but some tolas still had the final digits of their silver purity stamped on the flan after assay. In the case of gold tolas, two slightly different purities were in regular use throughout the period from the 1860's until Indian Independence in 1947. The use of gold tolas then ended. 'Pure gold' was 24 carat gold, with a cited purity of 9950. 'Guinea gold' was 22 carat gold, with a cited purity of 9166 (91.66 %). A few tolas, mainly those produced by small businesses, had their purity cited as '100 Touch'. This referred to pure gold assessed by using a touchstone. Nearly all gold tolas, which have survived the melting pot, are of One Tola weight. Significant numbers of half tolas and some quarter tolas are also known. Larger sizes include a few Five Tolas and there are occasional reports of Ten Tolas.

Silver tolas were issued across a much wider range of weights than the gold issues. The silver tolas span the range from 100 Tolas (1,166 gm) down to Five Tolas (5.830 gm), plus a few smaller pieces. The 100 tolas, 50 tolas and 25 tolas pieces have mostly been melted down for their metal, but the smaller sizes are not uncommon.

Manufacturers and retailers

Some of the jewellers and bullion dealers who sold their tolas from retail premises in the Zaveri Bazaar made their own tolas. Other retail jewellers and bullion dealers commissioned manufacturing to third parties – often to Her Majesty's Mint, Bombay.

In the case of Devkaran Nanjee, the manufacturing was commonly performed by H. M. Mint, Bombay. For one issue, the manufacturer was the 'Royal Mint Refinery, London'. The contract may have been lodged with the Bombay Mint and sub-contracted to London. The last tolas issued by Devkaran Nanjee were manufactured at the 'I G' Mint / Bombay', the Indian Government Mint. They were issued between Indian Independence in 1947 and the decimalisation of bullion transactions in 1952 (a few years before the 1957 decimalisation of coinage).

Manilal Chimanlal was a prolific retailer of tolas. The company's gold tolas date from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, whereas its silver tolas illustrate the Gateway of India in Bombay whose construction was completed in 1927. The company contracted the manufacturing of some silver tolas to the Bombay Mint (H. M. Mint / Bombay) and it struck other tolas at its own premises (M. C. & Co., Bombay – Manilal Chimanlal & Co.).

The changing role of tolas during the 1930's.

Times changed and the economy evolved. By the 1930's, there were adequate supplies of paper banknotes, a situation that had not existed in the 1860's. There were also plenty of silver coins for smaller transactions.

Tolas steadily lost their role in facilitating business transactions. Tolas became a vehicle for storing wealth. People kept savings in precious metal. A father might buy gold tolas for later conversion into jewellery for his daughter's marriage.

Tolas were also acquiring a role as presentation pieces, partly because they fulfilled the accepted norm that the gift should have an intrinsic value appropriate to the giver and the receiver. An example is the "Coronation 2 ½ tola silver bar" commissioned by Maharani Shantadevi in 1938 for the coronation of her husband Pratap Singh (1938-1951), the Gaikwar of Baroda. Maharani Shantadevi would have presented these tolas to guests whom she had invited to attend the coronation.