



ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Secretary General
Mr. M. R. Broome,

Newsletter Editor
Mr. S. Goron,

Annual Subscription
£6.00; H. Fl. 25; FF 75; \$ 12.

Regional Secretaries
General: Mr. G. P. Hennequin,

Europe: Dr. H. J. van der Wiel,

UK & Eire: Mr. K. W. Wiggins,

America: Mr. W. B. Warden, Jr.,

South Asia: Mr. P. P. Kulkarni,

NEWSLETTER No. 117
March - April 1989

ONS News

Would members please note that the next London meeting of the ONS will *not* now take place on 8 April as previously announced but will be on 13th May from 14.15 at 9 Montague Street, WC1.

Obituary

DR. P. D. WHITTING, GM.

The death of Philip Whitting, shortly before Christmas, was widely reported with obituaries in all the English 'quality' newspapers. However, it is fitting that the Newsletter should include a short note on one of the most influential teachers of numismatics in recent times. His kindly and enthusiastic encouragement helped many people to make the transition from interested collector to knowledgeable numismatist. His firm support for local 'Coin Clubs', through the British Association of Numismatic Societies, did much to counter the academic disdain sometimes found amongst professionals in this field whilst he himself contributed extensively to a new understanding of the complex Byzantine coinage. His own collection of Byzantine coins was given to the Barber Institute at Birmingham, primarily as a teaching aid and is now available for reference to all students of the series. In spite of a serious accident and, latterly, failing health, his support extended also to the founding of ONS and he was our first and only Honorary Member. The eulogy given at his cremation called him a kind man, a gentle man, and a great teacher; many people will sadly miss his wise guidance.

MRB

New and Recent publications

1. The book on the coinage of the Marathas by Ken Wiggins & K. K. Maheswari, mentioned in earlier Newsletters, was published in January. The book costs US\$40 or Indian Rp 350 and is available from The Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, P O Anjaneri, 422 213 Distr. Nasik, Maharashtra, India. More details in the next Newsletter.
2. Ray Hebert has published an article entitled "The Ayat al-Kursi and the Asma al-Husna on a Salghurid amulet" in *Hamdard Islamicus*, vol. XI, no. 3 (Autumn 1988).
3. Steve Album has continued his series of articles in *The Celator* with one entitled "7th century radical reform led to a truly Islamic style of coinage". This appeared in the January 1989 edition and covers 'Abd al-Malik's reform and the introduction of a new and unified Umayyad coinage.
4. *Numismatics International* vol. 23, no. 1 (January 1989) has an article by Larry Binger entitled "Legacy of the Lucky Chinaman". This describes a find of a couple of uncommon Annamese coins while prospecting for gold in the Sierra Nevadas of North California. The same issue also contains details by Ray Hebert of five coin dies for Mughal and Indian State rupees donated to the National Numismatic Collection. The dies are described as "unofficial" !

Other News

1. Members may like to know that the collection of the late Tony Webdale will be coming up for auction at Glendinings in the summer. Catalogues will be available from the auction house or A H Baldwin & Sons Ltd. in due course. The collection contains a wide range of Islamic material with very little duplication. It is hoped to provide more information when the auction date is known.
2. The auction by Joel L. Malter & Co. Ltd. of Islamic gold coins & glass weights from the Dr Frank Linville collection mentioned in Newsletter 115 will now be held on Sunday 2 April 1989 in Los Angeles. The venue is the Century Plaza Hotel, 2025 Avenue of the Stars, Century City, California, 90067. Further details are available from the auctioneers at P.O. Box 777 16661 Ventura Blvd., Suite 518, Encino, CA 91316, USA.

3. The Royal Numismatic Society invites applications for grants from The Nicholas Lowick Memorial Fund for the Promotion of Oriental Numismatic Research.

This fund was set up by the Society as a permanent memorial to its former Fellow and Officer, Nicholas Lowick, Curator of Oriental Coins in the British Museum 1962-1986. Nicholas was not only a leading international authority in his field, but is also remembered with affection as a generous friend to all interested in Oriental Coins, scholars, enthusiasts, collectors and dealers alike.

Since 1988 the Society has made annual awards from the Fund to promote the study of the subject to which Nicholas devoted his career. The first two awards from the fund were made to Mr Andrew Oddy of Berkhamstead, Herts, for his study of Arab-Byzantine coins and to Dr Stuart Munro-Hay of Condom, France, for his study of a hoard of Axumite coins in Aden.

Annual Awards from the fund will be of one or two grants of £250 each towards travel and accommodation costs to enable the successful applicant(s) to study some aspect of Oriental Numismatics.

Applications should be made in writing together with 1. an account of the project for which the grant is sought, 2. details of intended expenditure, 3. one written reference from an academic of recognised position. Awards will be made in June 1989.

Those wishing to apply or enquire should write to the Honorary Secretary of the Society, c/o Dept. of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG.

Donations to the Fund are still welcome and should be sent to the same address. Cheques should be made payable to "The Nicholas Lowick Memorial Fund."

Members interested in both numismatics and philately may like to know that during March and April the National Postal Museum, London, is showing a display of classical Turkish stamps, postmarks of Istanbul and a selection of contemporary Ottoman coins and banknotes. The museum is located in King Edward Street, EC1, near St. Paul's Cathedral, and is open Monday - Thursday 09.30 - 16.30, Friday 09.30 - 16.00. Entrance is free.

Zeus and Pallas on coins of Azes I by R. C. Senior

Not until the last few rulers did the Indo-Greeks use kharosthi letters as changing control marks on their coins. Among the Arachosian group, Hermaios put the letters in the reverse field of his coins whereas Hippistratos and the Gandharan group put them on the obverse below the exergue line. Later, and on some copper, the reverse field was used in the north and particularly Jammu. The letters used were in different groups in the two areas and this is similar to what is found on Indo-Scythic coins, with the group of letters used in one area differing from those in another. I am sure that there is a strict sequence to their use but apart from a few recut dies and the preponderance of one or two letters there is little clue to the way in which the system worked.

In table (I) we see a series of coins with Zeus facing on the reverse, beginning with the joint Spalirises/Azes coins. The tetradrachms are rare and the drachms scarce, particularly of the last 4 control letters. The first type shown of Azes alone is particularly scarce and has no control marks: I suspect that it might be a separate issue rather than a continuation, probably from a different geographical location since the monogram in the left field occurs on coins more associated with the north. The third group of Azes coins is obviously related to both the previous coinages by monogram and control letters as well as type but is distinct in having no known drachms to parallel the tetradrachms. It does however have a group of coins with a pronounced dot in front of the horse on the obverse. In my own collection I only have two specimens but I am sure that others exist and will be found once one starts to look for them. The final group might not be a sequential issue but a different mint or workshop since the coins are generally coarser and smaller in flan and also have a corresponding copper issue which none of the previous coins have - the beautiful square, king on camel/bull coins known in three sizes.

O = Tetradrachm
 Δ = Drachm



TABLE 3 PALLAS GROUP
 I = KNOWN FROM AZES/AZIL/MULE

AZESI	NONE	η	ρ	ς	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο
CONTROL LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	ο



36



36



26

TABLE 2 ZEUS FACING GROUP B

OBVERSE LETTER IN EXERGUE	NONE	ρ	ς	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ
OBVERSE LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ
OBVERSE LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ
OBVERSE LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ
OBVERSE LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ
OBVERSE LETTER IN EXERGUE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ

TABLE 1 ZEUS FACING GROUP A

REVERSE CONTROL LETTER	NONE	η	ρ	ς	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ
SPALISSES WITH AZES	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο
AZES ALONE	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο
ζ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο
ζ + obov.	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο
☒	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο	δ	ο



1a



1a



1a



1a

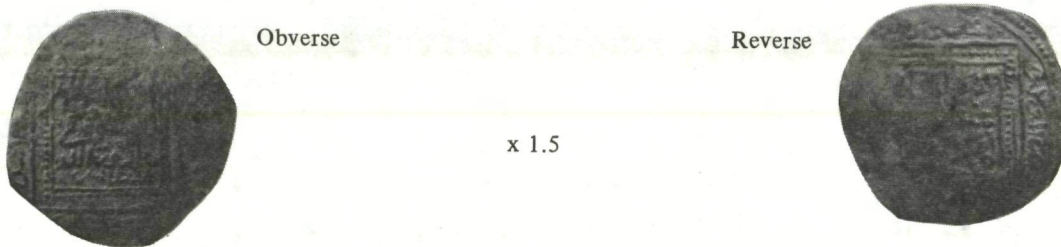
The next group of Zeus facing coins (table 2) come from Gandhara/Hazara and are fairly scarce, particularly the first type. Because the kharosthi letters appear in the obverse exergue they are sometimes difficult to distinguish, particularly when there has been re-cutting and I have omitted the less certain letters from this and the next table. These Zeus coins seem to have been followed by the much more plentiful Pallas series with similar monograms which were subsequently issued by Azilises and then, in different forms, by Azes II.

The Azes I Pallas coins begin with the control letters in the exergue and vary considerably in style and execution and then comes a slightly scarcer series where the control mark is placed before the horseman. There are variants with both series depending upon whether the streamer behind the king is formed from one ribbon that splits or two ribbons (or whip tails). These coins are generally broad at first but the latter series and the very rare coins of Azilises of this type are smaller in flan and poorer execution, as is the next series of Azes I in lines three and four of table 3. These coins mostly have the double streamer and are split into the coins with or without the dot on the reverse.

Accounting for the dots on these and other Indo-Scythic coins is difficult but they do not seem to be associated with a particular location or type and on the series shown here and the main City type of Azilises they seem to be part of a sequence to enable the mint administration to use the kharosthi letters in repetition, perhaps as part of a dating system. It would be nice if the letters used corresponded to the names of a cycle or years (e.g. monkey, lion etc.) but this is still a mystery. The dots are not random but occur in just a few places, either before the horse or behind the king's bowcase on the obverse or above/below the monogram in the right field of the reverse. On some Azes II coins they can occur elsewhere. The use of dots is confined to late Azes I, Azilises and early Azes II coins though one billon series of Gondophares uses them too in association with his planetary symbol, almost certainly as a way of denoting the sequence of issue.

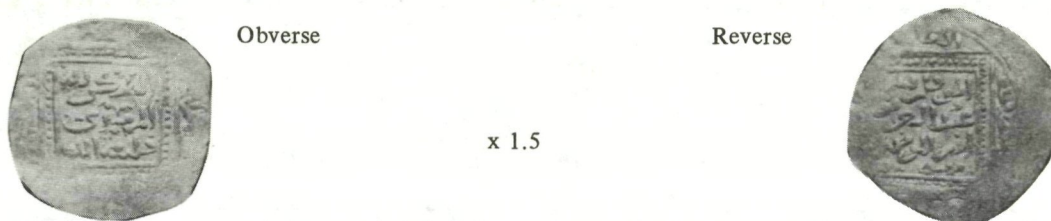
Notes on two fractional dinars of the Hafsids Abu Faris 'Abd al-Aziz II (AH 798-837) by Tawfiq Ibrahim

1. 1/2 dinar, mint Qabis. 2.4gr/ 19mm max.



The margins are partly effaced but the type is as Hazard¹ 615. This mint is unpublished for this dynasty and is written as **قابس** at the bottom of the obverse field. Previously the oasis of Qabis was only known to have struck coins during its Rashidi period in the middle of the 6th century H (see Zazard 24a).

2. 1/2 dinar, mint Mahdiyah. 2.45gr/ 19mm max.



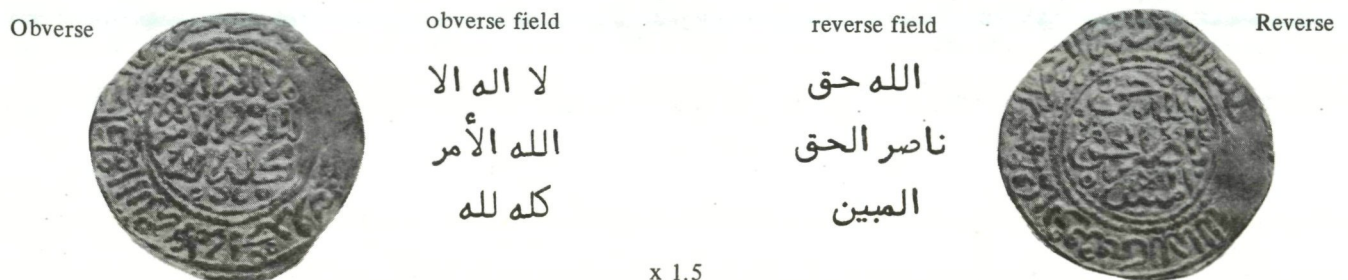
Again, the margins are partly effaced but the type appears to be Hazard 615. The mint is written as **مهدية** (Mehdiya) at the bottom of the reverse field. Hazard seems to doubt Farrugia's reading which is confirmed on the present specimen at the bottom of the reverse field. If we take into account existing numismatic evidence the mint of Mahdiyah had ceased to be operative for nearly two and a half centuries. The last recorded coin being of 549H and struck by William I of Sicily (see H. H 'Abd al-Wahab. *Revue Tunisie* 3^e et 4^e trimestre 1930, pp.215-218).

1. Harry W. Hazard, *The Numismatic History of Late Medieval North Africa*, New York, 1952.

Two Bunduqis of unpublished dates struck during the reign of Isma'il ibn al-Sharif (AH1082-1139) by Tawfiq Ibrahim

For known dates see Eustache¹, p.675.

1. Fas, (11)21 H. 3.5gr/ 25mm.



obverse margin **ضرب (ب) بحضرة (ة) فاس حاطها الله عام احد وعشرين . . .**

reverse margin, Koran XI, 88 **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وما توفيقى الا بالله (عليه تو) كلت واليه انيب**

2. Fas, 1125 H. 3.5gr/ 22mm.

The field legends are the same as above, but note the variations in the decorative motifs.



Obverse

Reverse

x 1.5



obverse margin **ضر(ب) بحضرة(ة) فاس(حا) طها الله عام حمسة وعشرين (و) مائة(و) الف**

reverse margin, Koran XI, 88 **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وما تو(ه) يقى الا بالله(عليه توكلت) واليه انيب**

The domination of the West African coast (ie: the old Gold Coast etc.) by the European powers gradually pre-empted the flow of sub-Saharan gold to the Maghreb and helps explain its penury in the coinage of the Alawites. Eustache (p.77) assumes with good reason that the gold used in minting these relatively scarce coins was probably from recycled coinage of the previous dynasties. It is of interest to note that the average weight of the Bunduqi (3.50gr) was set on Venetian standards and the Moroccan word for this coinage is itself a deformation of the name of this Adriatic city. Eustache seems to think that these dinars were not intended for circulation but to entice out into commerce the silver hoarded during the long civil war of the previous decades.

1. Daniel Eustache, *Corpus des Monnaies 'Alawites*, Rabat 1984, 3 vols.

Lead coins of the Satrap Chastana by Dilip Rajgor

E. J. Rapson was not aware of any lead coins of Chastana, the only coin of Chastana in base metal published by him being a copper coin of the horse type. Trivedi¹ published some new coins of Chastana in copper, since when little has been said about coins of Chastana in base metals. Here for the first time are published four new varieties of the coins of Chastana in lead.

Variety - a (one coin)

Obv. Rayed Sun centre, crescent to the right; Brahmi legend around, "... Kaputrasa Chasta(na)sa."

Rev. Six-arched hill, surmounted by a crescent. Kharosthi legend around, "... taka Putrasa Chata. . ."

Weight 2.35 gms
Size 1.2 x 1.4 cms
Thickness 2 mms
Provenance Malwa



The lead coinage of Chastana is different from his silver coins in many respects. Firstly, the obverse legend is only in Brahmi and quotes his patronymic. At the present state of our knowledge it is difficult to be certain about Chastana's status as Kshatrapa or Mahakshatrapa, but it is clear that this coin must have been issued very early in his reign (see var. b below). Secondly, on the reverse, the form of the six-arched hill is very different, whilst there is a transliteration of the Brahmi legend in Kharosthi.

Variety - b (3 coins)

Obv. Crescent on the left, rayed Sun centre or right; legend in Brahmi, "Rajno Kshatrapasa Ghasamotika . . ."

Rev. Six-arched hill, surmounted by a crescent. Kharosthi legend around, "(MO?) ta(i)ka Putrasa Chata . . ."²

Weight 1.35, 1.16, 1.61 gms
Diameter 1.3, 1.2, 1.3 cms
Thickness 1, 1, 1.5 mms
Provenance Malwa (2 coins); third not known.



It is very clear that this variety was issued when Chastana was Kshatrapa. The only difference between variety a and b is the position of the rayed Sun and the crescent. The combination of the Brahmi legends of variety a and b gives the complete legend as "Rajno Kshatrapasa Ghasamotika Putrasa Chastanasa". There is hardly any difference in the reverses of these two varieties.

Variety - c (3 coins)

Obv. Rayed Sun right of centre, crescent left of centre; Brahmi legend around: "Rajno . . . (Chastana)sa".

Rev. Six-arched hill with crescent at top. No traces of Kharosthi legend.

Weight 1.63, 2.10, 1.63 gms
Diameter 1.3, 1.2, 1.3 cms
Thickness 2, 2, 1 mms
Provenance Malwa (2 coins); third not known.



This variety is remarkable for its small size and the absence of any patronymic. The form of the hill is also different from the previous varieties. The other important thing lies in the absence of a Kharosthi legend.

Variety - d (one coin)

Obv. Rayed Sun right, crescent left, Brahmi legend around: "Rajno . . . tanasa."

Rev. Three-arched hill. No legend.

Weight 1.46 gms
Diameter 0.9 cms
Thickness 2 mms
Provenance not known.



In this variety the size of the coins is further reduced. The major change lies in the adoption of a three-arched hill instead of the six-arched hill.

Variety - e (6 coins)

Obv. Rayed Sun centre right, crescent to the left. The direction of the crescent varies. Traces of Brahmi legend on some coins

Rev. Three-arched hill. No legend. Often two or three hills can be seen.

Weight 1.25, 1.52, 1.61, 1.27, 1.55, 1.05 gms
Diameter 0.9, 0.9, 0.9, 1.0, 1.0, 0.8 cms
Thickness 1.5, 2.0, 2.0, 1.5, 2.0, 1.0 mms
Provenance not known.



In this variety, the size of the coins is reduced still further and there is hardly any space even for the traces of the legend on the obverse. The crescent has moved 90° to be open or closed in relation to the Sun. Moreover, on the reverse, the size of the three-arched hill is reduced to such an extent that on some coins two or more hills can be seen.

Lead coins of Chastana in so many varieties indicate a prolonged currency of a basic type which went through many changes. It discarded the use of patronymics and the Kharosthi legend; it changed over from a six-arched hill to a three-arched hill.

Notes

1. Trivedi, H.V., J.N.S.I., XV, pp.77-78; XVII, pp.89-98 and XVIII, pp.169-171. Trivedi (J.N.S.I., XVIII, pp.170) has also published two copper coins in an article entitled "Two coins re-struck by Chastana". But from the photographs, it is impossible to arrive at any particular conclusion. If these coins were restruck, they may not have been re-struck by Chastana but more probably by Rudradama I, as copper coins of Chastana, counter-struck by Rudradama I have been seen by the author of this article.
2. Trivedi, XVIII, Pl. X-11. Trivedi has also read the same legend on the reverse. But he states that the coin is in copper, but more likely it is of lead. Coins no. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 & 8 are from the collection of Mr. Lance Dane of Bombay; no. 7 from the collection of Mr. Venilal Varia of Bombay. I am thankful to both of them for granting me permission to study and publish their coins.

Mughal Miscellany

1. Akbar - a half rupee of Akbarpur Tanda

Akbarpur Tanda has been identified with the town of Akbarpur near Tanda in the Faizabad district of Oudh. Copper coins and silver rupees are known from this mint, the latter being struck between AH 971 and 975 (see Lahore Museum cat. nos. 271-3, Lahore Museum cat. nos. 249-250). Published here, by courtesy of Dr Becker is a half rupee, weighing 5.78 grams. Although only traces of the mint-name are on the coin (reverse, bottom margin), the characteristic mint-mark of the Akbarpur Tanda rupees ✕ can be seen in its usual position to the left of the 'kaf' of the word 'Akbar'. The date is either 970 or 974 (9∨0 or 9∨9̣). The legends are the usual ones for this series with the Kalima on the obverse, and ruler's name and titles on reverse.



2. Akbar - an unusual rupee of Berar

Akbar's Ilahi rupees of Berar are well known and are fairly common. Dr Becker has sent details of a rupee of the usual type with the additional inscription راج - Ram above the ∨ of Zarb on the reverse. One or two additional specimens of this variety are known. Members are invited to comment on the significance of this word on these coins. The present coin weighs 11.45 grams. The date is incomplete, being Ilahi year 4x, month Khurdad or Amardad).



Dr Becker points out that some other rupees of Berar show a small bird at 6 o'clock on the reverse. The bird also occurs on the rare rupees of Jehangir from this mint.

3. Aurangzeb - A rupee of Makhtal ?

On page 58 of NS XLIII (Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal), Capt. Tarapore described and illustrated a rupee of this mint bearing the date 1169AH ('Alamgir II). According to C. R. Singhal¹, the illustration showed the coin to be completely worn, with the name of the king, mint and date being illegible! Capt. Tarapore identified the supposed mint-place as being Makhtal in the Mahbubnagar district of the former state of Hyderabad (about 85 miles south-west of the city of Hyderabad - modern Andhra Pradesh).

Dr Becker has provided details of a rupee struck in the name of Aurangzeb which has been tentatively read as Makhtal. The mint is written **مکتال**, ie Makhtal, assuming the first letter is a mim. It has to be said that this reading is very uncertain as the first letter can be read as a mim and the final letter as lam only with a fair amount of imagination. Can any reader let me know whether Makhtal is usually written in the way suggested, ie **مکتال**

The coin is dated year 30. As Aurangzeb's accession was on 1.XI.1068, year 30 corresponds to 1.XI.1097 - last day of X.1098, or approximately October 1686 - October 1687. During this period Aurangzeb was very busy in the Deccan finishing off the Deccan's sultanates. The Bijapur monarchy fell September 1686 after a lengthy siege of the city. On 30 October that year Aurangzeb left Bijapur and travelled by easy stages to Gulbarga and Bidar, halting there for several weeks. On 14 January 1687 he set off for Hyderabad, arriving within two miles of that city on 28 January.² Hyderabad was the new capital of the Qutb Shahi dynasty whose chief fortress was Golkonda a few miles away. The Qutb Shahi rulers had for some years already been striking rupees in the name of the Mughal ruler. Aurangzeb now set about the conquest of the sultanate. Golkonda fell on 29 September 1687. It is not clear without further research whether Makhtal was located within the Bijapur 'Adil Shahi territories or those of the Qutb Shahis, or whether it had previously been the scene of fighting between the Mughals and sultanate forces. Although year 30 is right for coins struck at places in this general area, Makhtal could not have been on Aurangzeb's route from Bijapur to Hyderabad, mentioned above. It is possible, of course, that part of his army went by another route and halted awhile at Makhtal, or that after the fall of Golkonda a Mughal garrison was quickly installed at Makhtal and struck a few coins there. Stylistically, the present rupee is very crude. Although the initial coinage for Golkonda in the name of Aurangzeb (struck by the Qutb Shahi ruler) was very crude, subsequent rupees, and those struck by the Mughals at Bijapur, Gulbarga, Mohemmedabad (Bidar) were of quite good style. This leads me to think that this coin may not have been struck by Mughals but by some other authority, e.g. the Marathas, at some place other than Makhtal. Readers are invited to send in their views and comments.




weight 11.24 grams

1. C.R. Singhal: Mint-towns of the Mughal emperors of India, Bombay 1953, p.26.
2. Sir Jadunath Sarkar: History of Aurangzeb, vol. IV, first published 1919, reprinted New Delhi 1972.

4. An unidentified rupee of Shah 'Alam II

The following rupee is published by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London. It is a well-produced coin bearing Shah Alam's Hami Din couplet and is dated AH 1198, year 26. Only a portion of the mint is visible on the coin, viz.

The most distinctive thing about the coin is the anchor mint-mark on the reverse.  I do not recall seeing this mint-mark on any other Indian coin. There is also a small 'Shri' to the left of the mint-name. One suggestion for the latter is Chhachrauli (چھچھرولی), in the Ambala district of the Panjab, and known as a mint-place for copper coins dated AH 1215 and 1216. The anchor mint-mark suggests the coin was minted somewhere with a significant maritime or river trade. Chhachrauli is not too far from the river Yamuna but probably not near enough to justify such a mint-mark. Has any member seen a similar coin, or any coin bearing the same mint-mark? And can anyone identify the mint?



An Introduction to Chinese-Siamese Pee Coins by G Hollink

暹羅比錢通寶

What are pee coins ?

Pee coins were intended, and issued as gambling tokens. In his descriptive work "Siam et les Siamois", Paris 1889, the French missionary l'abbé Pierre Similien Chevillard tells us in chapter XV "Jeux populaires etc." about a great passion of the Siamese people: gaming in the gambling dens or Honges. In these houses men from the street used to meet, ordinary people, who could not afford to stake much money, but just wanted to try their luck with some small change. And that is where pee coins came in, because small change was scarce !

The old Thai money system

From the 12th century onwards the official money in the Kingdom of Siam was the Pot-Du'ang, or silver bullet money. The unit was the Baht or Tical. In 1873 1 Tical = US\$0.61 or £0-2-6. The denominations that were issued were 4, 2, 1, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8, 1/16, and 1/32 Baht. (Values of 2 1/2, 1 1/2, 1/64 and even 1/128 also existed). 1 Baht was the value given to 15.4 grams of fine silver. The small bullet coin of 1/16 Baht (song-pei) and 1/32 Baht (pai) with a weight of about 1 and 0.5 grams respectively were not common, due to the problems in striking them and the waste incurred whenever these tiny coins were lost. Hence a general shortage of small change was the result.

There was, however, another, more extensively used monetary unit - the cowrie shell. Throughout living memory, the cowrie shell (Cyprea moneta) had been used as currency. The rate fluctuated, but over a long period of time an official rate of 6400 cowries to the Baht was used. Imagine how cumbersome it was to pay someone 1 Fuang (\$ 0.08) with 800 cowries in the market or to the banker at the gambling den. So the mostly Chinese owners of the Honges and firms "invented" a new currency medium for gambling purposes that was easier to handle - the pee token. The name "pee" is most likely derived from the Chinese word for the cowrie shell: pa or pa-tse.

The tokens had to be bought before gaming with legal silver money from the banker of the Hong. The winnings could be exchanged afterwards for silver again. Since the little pee coin represented a large amount of cowries (200 for the pai to 1600 for a salung), people came to learn that the pees were much easier to handle and carry in their pockets than the shells.

They were gladly accepted in the marketplace and the shops adjacent to the Hong, and they would be redeemed any time by the Hong of issue for silver money. This latter was the most important condition imposed by the government on the Hong in connection with the issue of pee tokens and led to the private gambling tokens becoming part of the T'ung-Pao or generally accepted currency.

The chosen material and place of manufacturing

As long as coins have been struck and notes printed some people have felt the urge to issue imitations and forgeries. The firms were therefore greatly concerned to choose a material that was difficult to imitate or falsify. As most of the owners and firms were Chinese, they chose a product made according to the best, old traditions of the porcelain kilns of Tehua, Fukien in the country of their fathers (China): porcelain. Because Siam did not produce porcelain and had no experience in producing it, and because travelling in those days was still an adventure – taking months – the firms did not have to worry that their valuable porcelain gambling tokens would be easily imitated.

The concept and its success, however, were imitated. A great variety of materials was used for pee manufacturing in Siam: earthenware, faience, glass, bronze, lead, tin, and even mother of pearl. The mother of pearl types have their origin in China, too, and are real pieces of art. Every piece had to be worked with great skill and patience. There was no way of repairing a mistake. In the last years of issue, pee coins were struck in cupro-nickel and thus resembled ordinary coins.

Period of use and dating

The first pee coins appeared about 1760 and they were issued until the 25th of August 1875. On this date a royal decree was issued requiring those who possessed gambling tokens to redeem them by the 28th of November 1875, after which date the circulation of pee coins as a currency was prohibited. In 1893 the use of the tokens in the gambling dens was outlawed, and on the 1st of April 1916 the gambling dens were closed.

Usually, the pees do not bear the date of issue. In some cases dates may be deduced from the figures on the obverse, like the portrait of Queen Victoria derived from the imperial coinage of Hongkong; or the head of the young king Chulalongchorn that was used from 1874 onwards. There is, however, a limited number of pees that do bear dates according to the Chinese sexagony calendar. During the 115 years or so that pees were issued we can find $115/60 = 2$ possible dates: an early one and the other 60 years later. Which of the two dates applies in any one case has to be determined from such features as glazing, use of colours, inscriptions and figures.

The inscriptions and figures

Most of the inscriptions are in Chinese. Some are in both Chinese and Siamese, and a few have only Siamese inscriptions. Usually the inscriptions on the pee tokens can be categorised as wishes, auspicious words, admonitions, quotations, and the names of the firms who issues them.

These names might be followed by:

司公	Kung-Ssü	a company;
合	Hoh	a society, union;
記記	Chi	a shopsign, or trademark.

In a Kung-Ssü, various societies could be united, so it is not unusual to read the name of the issuing firm on the reverse and the name of the society who actually used the pee on the reverse. In some cases the shopsign of a company or firm became so well known that it ousted the name of the firm itself.

Some firms numbered the pieces with the name and numbers incused in official Chinese; others just used a blue, painted number in Soochow/commercial Chinese. Hence these pees were numbered sequentially, and each piece had its own number. Often the name of the coin itself is also found in combination with the value – Salung, or Fuang. For this name different characters were used:

比 秘 鉍比 鉍 鉍

These characters were just used phonetically and had no other meaning than the name "Pi" (pee).

I do not agree with Mr. P. S. Hamel, the Dutch Consul-General in Bangkok in 1886, who wrote in his correspondence to the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences (Batavia, Netherlands East Indies, now Indonesia), that the figures had no meaning, and were merely ornamental designs.

On the contrary, they do have a certain meaning in relation to gambling and money-making and they are part of the Chinese mythological world. We often find lions, tigers, qilins (Ch'ih-Lin), dragons, toads or frogs, fish, bats, butterflies, fruit, pomegranates, lotusflowers, scrolls, etc.

Some explanations:

lion: not a real lion, but the "dog of Buddha", symbol of power, and wisdom. The male playing with a ball, the female with a cub;

Ch'ih-lin: third of the four mythological animals, with the dragon, phoenix, and tortoise. It represents longevity, illustrious offspring, truth and wisdom;

toad, or frog: symbol of money-making, luck; regarded as animals of prophecy.

fish: symbol of luck, and fertility; emblem of wealth and harmony;

bat and butterfly: longevity;

pomegranate: emblem of good luck;

scrolls: symbolising the holy script of Buddhism; vault of the truth.

Summary

The Chinese-Siamese porcelain pee coins issued by the Hong and firms were essentially private tokens. Originally intended as gambling tokens, they became T'ung-Pao, generally accepted currency. This was possible because they filled the gap in the market as small change, between cowrie shells on the one hand and the more valuable, legal silver money on the other. Whereas it was usual for details of the minting of legal coinage to be recorded in official mint reports, important source material for the later production of numismatic catalogues, no such reports are available for the privately produced pee coinage. It may be supposed that the companies involved would have kept their own records of the pee coins they ordered from the porcelain kilns, which, in turn, might have kept production files. No such files have so far come to light. Thus the collector of pee coins has to do without a comprehensive catalogue of these items which would enable him to look for and identify his latest acquisitions or find out the mintage details.

There is, however, one noteworthy category of pees that actually quote the numbers issued; those will be the subject of a future paper.