

# ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

## ONS NEWSLETTER No 143 Winter 1995

### ONS News

#### ONS Regional Secretary General Area

Bob Senior has taken over as Secretary of this area sooner than previously reported. Would all members in the General Area please note this.

#### ONS meeting in Leiden

On 22 October 1994 the annual ONS meeting took place at the Museum of Antiquities/ Royal Coin Cabinet, Leiden. Over 20 members attended. After the traditional welcome with coffee in the library of the Royal Coin Cabinet, the programme continued in the auditorium of the museum.

The meeting was opened with a minute's silence for the late Dr van der Wiel, who had served the Society for so many years as Regional Secretary for continental Europe.

The morning lecture was given by F L Hendriks and covered the various religious symbols and motifs to be found on the coinage of Nepal. This interesting subject, which was much appreciated by the audience, dealt with different aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism as well as the Tantric symbolism. After lunch, the programme continued with a talk by R Dauwe on the results of a die-study of the coins of Jaipur state. The findings so far, based on coins in his own collection, show groups of dies being used, which could indicate that different gangs of workers were employed within the mint, each of which used their own sets of dies.

W Op den Velde gave some information about his inventory of Chinese cash coins, which would be available to members for the cost of photocopying and postage. D Nauta drew attention to Hans Wilski's forthcoming book on Ottoman countermarks and invited any member with such coins to provide Mr Wilski with details.

TD Yih discussed a newly discovered Sogdian? Kai Yuan cash coin and J Lingen talked about the pattern 50 paisa silver coin of Radhanpur published in Newsletter 142.

The meeting ended with an auction of oriental coins which raised Dfl. 1140 for ONS funds. Our thanks are due to Spink and Son, London, who generously donated the majority of the auction material.

Another ONS meeting is planned for 1995 when the ONS will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. Details have not yet been determined and all suggestions are welcome. Please send them to Jan Lingen, Regional Secretary, Europe. JL

#### ONS meeting Cologne

The Indian Collectors Circle met at the Pullmann Hotel, Cologne on 12 November 1994.

Dr Pieper gave a talk on ancient Indian tribal coinage which led to a lively discussion on symbols, religious and political considerations as well as the economic background. Jan Lingen showed some slides of rare coins of Radhanpur and quoted references from contemporary documents. He also reported on his visit to the Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, on the work that had been carried out there and the facilities and potential for researchers.

After lunch, the group discussed an offer from Dr Paschmann to organise an ONS meeting in connection with the International Numismatic Congress to be held in Berlin in 1997. The meeting would include a visit to the Berliner Münzkabinett (Bode-Museum).

The presence of Dr von Kleist, the co-founder and previous organiser of the Circle, reminded those present that the group would be 20 years old in January 1995. Mr Bartonitschek mentioned that he had available for anyone interested all the lectures that had been given at earlier meetings of the Circle.

Medal specialist Dr Rothkopf showed slides depicting items that had been struck in Europe for Arab states, explaining their political and economic background.

The 1995 meeting will take place on Saturday 4 November in the Pullmann Hotel Mondial (Raum Mainz), Kurt Hackenberg Platz 1. Mr Popp announced that he would be giving a talk on Yemen coinage, especially Ottoman copper coinage. NG

#### Mongol Imperial Money

The Oriental Numismatic Society and the British Museum sponsored a study day on the money from the Mongol empire in the coin room at the British Museum on Saturday, 28 January 1995.

The historian, David Morgan, set the stage for the rest of the day's proceedings. In twenty minutes, he was able to give a comprehensive review of the major points of the expansion and dissolution of the Mongol empire. He identified the complex background of Central Asia and north and south China that Chingiz Khan faced in his rise to power and election as Great Khan in 1206. Chingiz Khan captured the capital of the Jin empire, near modern Beijing, in 1215. It was followed by the necessity to secure his western border with the Qara Khitai. This started the Mongol expansion in the west, experienced first by Bukhara and Samarqand in 1220. Subsequent raids, then conquest, took place in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. He returned to Mongolia by 1225 in order to continue his advance on the Chinese, especially the Southern Song empire, but died in 1227. His son and successor, Ogedai, reinstated his policy and established control

over the extensive territories. After his death, firm management of the empire was not re-established until 1250 when Mongke became the Great Khan. Under his directive, Hulagu captured Baghdad and advanced as far as Damascus. When Mongke died in 1260, his brother Kubilai was elected but a number of rival factions contested the choice and the empire began to fragment. Kubilai moved the capital to Beijing and was finally able to subdue south China and attacked Japan, without success, twice.

There are various names for the groups that ruled this large expanse of territory, the Ilkhanate in the Middle East, the Yuan in China, the Golden Horde in southern Russia, which had sway as far north as Moscow, the Blue and White Hordes or Chaghadaids in central Asia. They lasted in some places longer than others. The Mongols were expelled from China in 1368, collapsed in Persia about 1335 but remained in power in the grasslands for considerably longer. Various branches, such as the Crim Tartars still held power until Catherine the Great in AH 1197/AD 1783.

Dr Morgan concluded his survey by emphasising that the Mongol empire was the largest land-based empire the world has ever known and it proved to be one of the most durable as well.

Coinage began when Chingiz Khan conquered Samarqand. Judith Kolbas traced the major types from the conquests in AH 617/AD 1221 through its development in the Middle East.

At first, financial administration was established only where Chingiz Khan personally marched and took direct authority. He set up a bureau in Transoxiana, which struck large flan, thin billon coins, and a different one when he moved south into Afghanistan, which issued small, thick, base silver. When he started his return to Samarqand in AH 619/AD 1222 he re-organised the administration, combining the northern and southern types, and minted at Astarabad, Samarqand, Kurriman and Bulghar on the Volga. This lasted for only two years because he died in AH 624/AD 1227.

Under Ogedai, the governor of Samarqand province moved east to Khojanda and seems to have lost the right to control monetary affairs. Instead, the Khurasani governor issued in Transoxiana and Khurasan electrum or very light gold in AH 630-31/ AD 1233-4. Ogedai had an important *quriltai* in AH 632/ AH 1235 which reformed the tax structure and all coinage was stopped. The new approach was not successful and another change occurred in AH 636/ AD 1239. The governor was told to mint again and he began to make arrangements but felt it most important to establish control over the large forces in Adharbayjan. They were not at war but occupying a very rich land. So the governor sent his son and the brother of the local ruler of Isfara'in. In AH 637/ AD 1239, they struck money at several mints made of good silver which had a bow design. This coinage ceased in AH 640/ AD 1242 when Ogedai died and his appointee lost favour under his widow, the mother of the new khan.

The new governor ordered a new type of silver coinage with a different range of mints to be struck in the Kur-Aras river valley. This coinage had the Mongol archer on horseback, issued from AH 642-47/ AD 1244-49.

After several years of civil war, Mongke Khan restructured the coinage and centralised it at Tabriz. From AH 650-68/ AD 1252-71, the hexagon *qa'an al-'Adil* was the only type produced there. Meanwhile, Hulagu conquered 'Iraq-i 'Arab and the Jazira and issued coins in his own name there but not at Tabriz. His son, Abaqa, defeated the combined forces of the Chaghadaids and Ogedaids at the Battle of Herat in AH 667/AD 1270, causing the coinage of the Ilkhanate to change. After several years of tentative styles, the standard silver type emerged with one side in Mongolian script while the other continued to have the Muslim profession of faith. This type remained until the middle of Uljaytu's reign, with a curious exception during the first two years of Ghazan Mahmud's reign when he used Persian. After AH 709/AD 1309, Ilkhanate coinage is exceedingly copious and comes from hundreds of mints which produced a great variety of designs.

The western province of the Mongols was the earliest to mint and produced the most coinage throughout the empire. Besides identifying some of the basic types, Dr Kolbas raised the question of the purpose for this money.

One of the contemporary historians of the Ilkhanid court was Rashid al-Din. During his report on the reform of Ghazan Mahmud, he made disparaging remarks about exceedingly base gold of Hurmuz on the Persian Gulf. What was this gold and when was it issued were examined by Judith Kolbas and Michael Cowell.

The political background and minting history of Hurmuz was examined by Dr Kolbas. Gold was issued only from AH 681-83/ AD 1284-84. Mr Cowell analysed four gold coins at the British Museum's laboratory to find that there was a sudden drop from 99% to about 84%, i.e. of 15%, after the first year. He discussed the three ways the coins were tested, X-ray fluorescence, scanning electronic microscopy and specific gravity, to verify the possibility of surface enrichment, plating or other tampering. These coins were compared with the almost pure gold the Mongols had struck before the Hurmuz issue and during Ghazan's reform. Since Mongol currency was generally based on silver the analysis of this specific coinage was informative about the Mongol use of gold and its role in international trade.

Damba Galsangdorj, the representative of the Mongolian mining company, Erdenet, provided a useful insight to the mineral wealth of Mongolia. He identified the silver and gold mines in Mongolia today and gave some statistics on current production. It supplies 1% of gold to the world market each year but does not currently exploit its two silver deposits. Whether these were mined in the time of Chingiz Khan is open to question. The silver is near the surface but no archaeological research has been conducted to examine the possibility.

He also delivered a report from the leading numismatist in Mongolia, Daminsuren, and from the Central Bank. Coins were circulating in Mongolia prior to the rise of Chingiz Khan and the first Mongol coin was produced in 1206, at the time of Chingiz Khan's election. It had an image of a warrior wielding a sabre. Currently, Mongolia is issuing a series of banknotes, printed in Britain, with the image of Chingiz Khan. A complete set was on display along with books on metal artefacts and geology.

David Sellwood provided some detailed analysis on how the dies of Ilkhanid coins could have been made. There is strong evidence for the use of punches, not only for decorations but for the Arabic and Mongolian letters as well. He also suggested that it is difficult to detect the same die because of the different effect light or heavy blows have on the silver. He made a particularly interesting observation that the famous pentafoil design on Ghazan's reform coinage was punched in section by section. The sides sometimes overlap or do not join correctly. The craftsman had to be extremely skilled to judge, mostly by eye, the complicated division of space.

Helen Wang brought together evidence on Yuan money in China. The earliest standard history mentioning Yuan coins was not completed until the time of Kubilai, and this has led to some debate over the earliest Yuan coins. Throughout the Yuan dynasty, the total production of coins was never great, and this is reflected by the relative paucity of Yuan coins in archaeological finds. It is clear that coins from previous dynasties also continued to circulate during the Yuan dynasty.

Instead, the Yuan government continued monetary traditions already in use when the Mongols conquered the territory of the Jin and Southern Song, namely the use of silver ingots (of a standard 50-lingo weight and in the form of a waisted bar) and paper money.

As the silver mines provided a substantial revenue for the Yuan state (3% of the total silver production went to the state), a new system of official regulation/inspection was established soon after the conquest of the Southern Song. Many of the larger silver mines are named in the standard history, and a number of ingots have been discovered with inscriptions that name the mine, the officials and the date.

Although silver was used as the general measure of wealth, paper money was the Yuan government's preferred medium of payment. Yet, the notes themselves were not given a denomination in silver but in cash or strings of cash. Some notes have survived, including those found at Karakhoto by Stein and Koslov, and others at religious sites or in tombs.

In recent years, Chinese numismatists working on the Yuan period have turned their attention to the growing number of finds of coins of a non-Chinese tradition, such as the Qarakhanids and Chaghadaids found in the north-western region of Xingiang.

In Central Asia, the Chaghadaids followed the early model of Chingiz Khan's coinage in Afghanistan. They did not put names on their money and, as often as not, neither the date nor the mint. Trying to organise the uninformative material fell to Dr Venetia Porter, who based a great deal of her remarks on the pioneering work of Dr TD Yih and Professor Jiang of the Xingiang Institute of Archaeology.

Three groups of coins were discussed:

1. the first group consists of coins which are totally anonymous with neither ruler's name nor date and with the mint described as *al-Urdu al-'Azam* and which contains, in addition to inscriptions in Arabic, words in Uighur and hP'ags-pa;
2. the second group still have no ruler's name but bear dates between the 640s and 690s/ 1240s and 1290s, and were minted at over ten different places including the important site of Almaligh. They also exhibit an interesting range of *tamghas* and other ornaments;
3. the third group start with the Chaghadai ruler Kebek (1318-1326), bearing the ruler's names for the first time and, while continuing the use of the characteristic *tamghas*, they are quite different in style.

Dr Porter's comments were aided by her work on the coin finds from Aurel Stein's expeditions earlier this century to the northern edge of the Taqla Makkan desert.

The Jochid ulus or Golden Horde started to mint coins, again anonymously, around the beginning of the 14th century. No paper, however, was presented on this little known coinage. Earlier, Dr Morgan had noted that this group was a rival of their southern cousins, the Ilkhanids, and in alliance with the Mamluks of Egypt, supplying them with most of their slaves. Did this trade affect their coinage?

Michael Rogers indicated that there is rich evidence and finds are being excavated at a wonderful rate in southern Russia or the Ukraine but it is still awaiting analysis. He put into perspective the day's messages which he presciently achieved because his work has covered so much material in the Islamic world. He provided a disturbing thought about the possibility that China seemed to have drained the west and central Asia of much silver. Economic historians concerned about gold/silver ratios have considered the outflow of gold from the Middle East to India. But if Mongol imperial money was based on silver, what would a silver drain to China have done to this ratio? We were left with a basic question about trade in bullion and the relative value of coins.

Unfortunately, there was time for only brief discussion at the end of the day, but it had brought out a number of general themes in Mongol money and clarified some of the main problems. It is a coinage that has hardly been codified and certainly not viewed as an integrated entity. Yet, if Chinese characters are on coins issued in Baghdad and the Venetian merchant Marco Polo worked in Beijing, we should expect the Mongols to have had an imperial view of money that matched their political and military effectiveness.

The study was formed around the interests of numismatists, providing an overview of the coinage, but a number of political and art historians attended as well. The material under discussion provided information to other disciplines and, in turn, we may be instructed by them. If ONS members are interested in any further meeting on this topic or have worked on special parts, including the derivative coinages, please contact me.

The excellent support provided by members of the British Museum allowed the day to run smoothly but the specific interest of Venetia Porter, Helen Wang, Michael Cowell and Joe Cribb were absolutely necessary for the day's success. The inspiration for the meeting is due to Susan and Marcus Phillips. Sincere appreciation is also extended to Muhammad Limbada of London, Dr Paul Buell in Seattle, Washington, Prof. Jiang in Xingiang, Damdinsuren in Ulaan Baatar and Dr TD Yih in Grave, Netherlands, all of whom made significant contributions to the day but could not attend.

Judith Kolbas, Flat 19, 119 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4RS, UK.  
Tel/Fax (44) (0)171 483 1983.

### ONS meetings London

There will be an ONS meeting at the British Museum Coin and Medal Department on **Saturday 18 March 1995**, commencing 13.30. Joe Cribb will give a talk on Javanese and Malay coin-shaped charms.

There will be an Indian coins study day at the British Museum on **3 June 1995** 10.30-16.00 at the Department of Coins and Medals. The subject will be *current research on Indian coins*. Speakers will include Bob Senior (ONS), Dr Venetia Porter (BM), and Sergei Kovalenko (Pushkin Museum, Moscow). Please contact Joe Cribb at the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG (tel: 0171-323 8585) if you wish to make a contribution on an Indian coin topic or for further information.

### ONS Meetings American region

There will be two meetings in 1995 both during New York International Numismatic Conventions. One will take place during the spring event on **Saturday 6 May** and the other during the winter event on **Saturday 9 December**. Both shows will be at the Sheraton NY Hotel and Towers (7th Avenue and 52nd Street, New York City). The ONS meeting usually commence at 17.00.

### MEMBERS NEWS AND REQUESTS

1. Michael Broome is finalising his data for a *Survey of the coinage of the Seljuks of Rum* and would be grateful for details of any rare or unpublished specimens in members' collections. He would also be interested to learn of any museum collections, other than the main national museums, that have holdings of such material.

2. Scott Semans (PO Box 22849, Seattle, WA 98122 USA) is working on a catalogue of Chinese charms/amulets. Open-work types will be the first chapter. He would like to hear from anyone with specimens not shown in Mandel, Chen, Yu Lianglu et al., Li Tso-hsien, Liang Yu et al., Wang Hsi-chi, Coushnrir, Thierry or Kainz or who would like a copy of the preliminary listing. He would also like to buy or borrow:

Ramsden, HA *Chinese open-work amulet coins*

Lockhart, JHS *Currency of the farther east, V2: (Glover collection illustrations)*

3. AJ Lansen (Haanderik 94, 3401 ET IJsselstein, Netherlands) is doing research on the countermarks on coins circulating in the former Netherlands East Indies (excluding Chinese chopmarks). He invites all members who have one or more such countermarked coin(s) in their collections to provide him with details of country, year of issue, denomination, metal, size and detail of the countermark(s). He would also like to know of any references to such countermarks in antiquarian books, dealers' lists, numismatic articles, auction descriptions, articles by society members etc. Mr Lansen hopes to publish a book on the subject, in English, in due course.

4. Bruce W Smith (PO Box 941 Sheboygan, WI 53082 USA) has written a number of papers and research guides which are available to members for the cost of photocopying and postage as follows:

- *Basic materials for the study of pre-Chin coinage*. About 20 pages. Includes illustrated survey of the coinage. \$3
- *Fire in the gate: a study of the warring states of Lin*. This is Bruce's Harvard master's thesis on the only city in China to issue spade coins, knife coins and round coins (c 300 BC). About 90 pages. Illustrated (coins); maps; charts. \$15
- *Pre-Ch'ing Chinese works on coins and paper money (In the Harvard Yenching Library)*. Fourteen pages. \$3
- *Local gazetteers as sources of information on coinage, paper money and banks*. \$3
- *Wealth of the South: a history of the Canton mint*. Covers 1888-1949. About 70 pages. \$10
- *US covert aid to China 1936-40*. Details how President Roosevelt and Treasury Secretary Morgenthau conspired to circumvent the Neutrality Acts and provide hundreds of millions of dollars to China. \$5
- *Banking and currency in the communist base areas during the war with Japan 1938-1945*. This is a base by base survey with the names of officers of each bank and government officials of each base. 41 pages; biblio. \$5
- *The commodity rationing system of mainland China*. This is based on his collection of nearly 3000 ration coupons and related items. Ten pages. \$2

Bruce also has a number of works in progress:

- *Bibliography on the history of money in China*  
This began as a bibliography on money in all of East Asia, and presently contains 8000 titles on 3x5 card (with 2000 more waiting to be added). After eliminating those works on areas outside of China (Japan, Korea, Vietnam, SE Asia), there should be 5000 to 6000 titles on China. When the computerisation of this bibliography is complete, subject searching will be possible. The works recorded are primarily those concerned with the physical, social, archaeological and historical aspects of money in China from Shang times to the PRC. Recent works which consist mainly of pie charts and statistics have not been recorded.
- *Encyclopaedia and research guide to the history of money in China*  
An extension of the bibliography mentioned above, this work will contain about 5000 entries, each with a brief essay and list of references. Subjects will include people connected with banks, mints and monetary policy; important collectors and writers on coins and monetary policy; specific coins and mints; lists of Ch'ing governors and governor-generals by province with dates; individual banks; firms which printed paper money for China; lists of railroads with brief background on each; bonds sold internally and overseas; information on night-clubs, bars and gambling dens which issued their own "money"; information on the communist base areas and liberated areas and their paper money; types of silver ingots used before 1933; bamboo money used in some parts of China during the Ch'ing and early Republic; engravers and designers of coins and paper money; and much more.
- *History of the modern mints of China 1888-1949*  
Bruce's files on this subject are already three feet thick! (Almost a metre!). This is one field in which there may be more information outside China than inside, because virtually all of the Ch'ing dynasty mints were set up and supplied by foreign companies --American, British, French, German, Austrian and Japanese. Before 1902 all the dies used to strike Chinese coins were engraved outside the country, and even as late as the 1930s, dies for the Central Mint at Shanghai were being made in the United States.
- *Survey of Sung dynasty coin mints*  
Most works mention about two dozen mints in operation during the Sung, but he has recorded the names and locations of around 70 mints, many of them iron coin mints in Szechuan province.
- *The coinage and geography of the Warring States period*  
The coins of the Warring States period record the names of nearly 200 cities, many of them not recorded in surviving texts. It may be possible to reconstruct something of the geography of that period using these ancient coins. Interestingly, China's city-state coinage was issued about the same time as the Greek city-state coinage.
- *The gambling industry in 19th century Thailand*  
During the 18th and 19th centuries, the government of Thailand regulated the gambling industry by creating a monopoly and selling licenses to operate gambling houses. By the mid-19th century, the sale of these licenses accounted for more than one third of the government's revenue. Historical sources mention that nearly all the houses were run by ethnic Chinese but provide little more information. By studying the gambling tokens they used, he has recorded the names of more than 500 gambling houses and can say something about how long they operated and who controlled them.

Bruce would welcome comments or suggestions on any of these topics. He is particularly interested to know of any first-hand accounts by people who visited mints, were in charge of a mint, or were involved in determining monetary policy (such as the quantity of coins or notes to be made, the type of coin to be made, or mints to be opened or closed). He would also like to know about any diaries or other private writings which refer to coins or paper money or to the collection of coins. He is also interested in biographies on and papers of bankers in China during the Ch'ing or Republic.

He is also eager to provide information on any form of coin, token, paper money or bank, from any period in China's history, which may be of use to someone else in their research and can be contacted at the address mentioned above or by telephone on 414 457 5174.

5. Mr ... is still missing a small number of mints for Fatimid and Batinid dirhams and glass jetons. Members are invited to ask for his wants list and he would be pleased to receive theirs.

6. Nick Rhodes visited Assam in October and on 24 October gave the SK Bhuyan memorial lecture to the Kamarupa Anusandhana Samiti in Gauhati, on the subject of *The progress of numismatic research in Assam*. He was then invited to Shillong and on 27 and 28 October gave a series of three Prof. HK Barpujari Endowment lectures to the North East Hill University on the subject of *The coinage of North-East India*. He is now working on the manuscript of these lectures, which will then be published by the NEHU in the form of a book.

7. Dr TD Yih is currently working on the typology of silver 1/2 miscal (5 fen) pieces from Xinjiang.

#### **NEW AND RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

1. The Numismatic Chronicle 1994, published by the Royal Numismatic Society of London, includes the following items:

- Stuart D Sears *A late Umayyad hoard from Nippur*
- Helen Wang *Coins and membership tokens of the Heaven and Earth Society*
- SC Munro-Hay *Coins of ancient South Arabia*
- Coin hoards from Turkey
- Various reviews

2. Bob Senior (Senior Consultants) has produced a 20-page publication entitled *Coinage and trade in East Arabia*. This is an illustrated listing of ancient coins found in ad-Dur, Mleiha, and elsewhere. It is available to ONS members for £3, \$5 or 8DM.

3. Kenneth MacKenzie has published an item *Two Turkish tokens from Adana* in NI Bulletin Vol 30, No 1, January 1995.

4. The Indian Coin Society Newsletter No 26, May 1994, contains an article by Dr PL Gupta entitled *Symbol on Sikh coins*. In it he identifies the leaf and "Mora" symbols on Sikh coins as different types of *kalangi*. The *kalangi* is an ornament worn over the turban and which can be construed as a sign of royalty. Moreover, he maintains that the so-called "Arisi" symbol is not a thumb-mirror but a round form of tiara that was worn like a *kalangi* by Persian royalty and later introduced into India.

5. *Honours and rewards in the British Empire and Commonwealth* compiled by Anthony N Pamm is to be published at the beginning of 1995. It is an encyclopaedic reference work covering the receipt and bestowal of honours and rewards at all levels in the British Empire and Commonwealth. It is the first book ever to cover the field in its entirety and provides in one place a total perspective and understanding of the subject.

The honours and rewards of nearly 100 countries are recorded, each component territory dealt with separately. Each country's awarding authority is listed together with the system of awards it instituted. Systems of honours and rewards may include many and various types: Pamm deals with the more important and recognised levels, that is the bestowal of public position and rank, official titular honours, admission into state orders and the bestowal of decorations and medals.

The work is to be published in two volumes- volume one: the United Kingdom and Eire and volume two: the British Empire and the Commonwealth, with 912 and 768 pages respectively. The price will be around £120 (£60 per volume).

The work is published by Scolar Press, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Gower House, Croft House, Aldershot, Hampshire, UK, GU11 3HR {tel. (44) (0)1252 331551; fax (44) (0) 1252 344405}.

6. The following books, published by IB Tauris, are available from Biblios Publishers Distribution Services Ltd, Star Road, Partridge Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 8LD, UK {tel. (44) (0)1403 710971; fax (44) (0)1403 711143}.

- David McDowall *A modern history of the Kurds*; 400 pages, £24.50; March 1995; ISBN 1 85043 653 3.
- Leila Fawaz *An occasion for war; civil conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*; 256 pages, £34.50; October 1994; ISBN 1 85043 201 5.
- Erik J Zürcher *Turkey, a modern history*; 388 pages, £14.95; August 1994; ISBN 1 85043 826 9.
- Martha Mundy *Domestic government; kinship, community and polity in North Yemen*; 256 pages, £39.50; February 1995; ISBN 1 85043 918

IB Tauris is collaborating with UNESCO on the publication of a major new series: the *History of civilizations of Central Asia*, a definitive multi-volume work which presents for the first time a comprehensive historical and cultural picture of Central Asia. Bringing together the most eminent specialists in the field, the series will trace the history of the ancient, mediaeval and modern world as it was shaped by the movements of peoples in this heartland of Eurasia, stretching from the Caspian Sea to the borders of China.

- Volume I: *The dawn of civilization: earliest times to 700 BC* edited by AH Dani and VM Masson; 535 pages, £22.50; ISBN 1850438692.
- Volume II: *The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 BC to AD 250* edited by Janos Harmatta; co-editors: BN Puri and GF Etemudi; 550 pages, £25; September 1994; ISBN 1 85043 870 6.
- Volume III: *The crossroads of civilizations: AD 250 to 750* edited by A Litvinsky; co-editors: Zhang Guand-da and R Shabani Samghabadi; 550 pages, £27.50; March 1995; ISBN 1 85043 871 4.
- *The Baku documents; a complete catalogue of Persian, Azeri, Ottoman and Arabic newspapers and journals in libraries of the Republic of Azerbaijan* compiled by Touraj Atabaki and Solmaz Rustamova; 224 pages, £50; November 1994; ISBN 1 85043 836 6.
- Miranda Vickers *the Albanians, a modern history*; 288 pages, £39.50; December 1994; ISBN 1 85043 749 1

7. Just received for review is a two volume work by Ellen M Raven entitled *Gupta gold coins with a Garuda-banner*. 490 pages plus appendices and high quality plates. It is published by Egbert Forsten, Groningen, Netherlands at Dfl 200. ISBN 90 6980 065 9.

8. Volume 104 of *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, published by Dr R Habelt GMBH Bonn 1994 has a paper entitled *A tax receipt from Hellenistic Bactria*, page 261-280 with 2 plates (one of coins) by JR Rea, RC Senior and AS Hollis. It concerns a unique parchment dated in year 4 of the King, God Antimachus and his colleagues Eumenes and a second Antimachus, The document gives the month as Ολωίου (Olous) and the city in which it was issued as Asangorna (?). this is the first mention of Theos Antimachus on anything apart from his coins and the reference to a second Antimachus is a clue perhaps to the coins in the name of Antimachus Nikephoros indeed being struck by a second king. The rest of the document deals with tax matters. The paper outlines the circumstances under which the document was written, the kings that ruled and succeeded each other, and their probable order of succession and dates based on this and other recent new evidence. (RCS)

### Lists Received

1. Stephen Album (PO Box 7386, Santa Rosa, Calif. 95407, USA) lists 112 (November/December 1994) and 113 (January 1995).
2. Robert Tye (...) list 28. This list contains a note on Ibrahim of Ghazna and other observations.
3. Sunrise Stamps Company (PO Box 62385 Kwun Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong) a list of Chinese bank-notes.
4. ONS members Nicholas Economopoulos and Eldert Bontekoe have formed a numismatic partnership and their first joint catalogue is due out soon. It will have quite a few Sasanian coins in it, as well as some Turkoman material. They will be glad to send out a catalogue to any ONS member requesting it.

### Auction Catalogues Received

These are usually received too late to publish in the Newsletter before the auction take place, but members can contact the issuers for future publications.

1. Jean Elsen s.a., Tervurenlaan 65, 1040 Brussel, Belgium: auction 38, 11 February 1995. Includes various oriental coins. Subscription for 1995 is 1000 Belgian francs.
2. Dmitry Markov, PO Box 950, New York, NY 10272, USA: a buy or bid sale catalogue closing 15 February 1995. This, too, includes some Oriental coins. Mr Markov is willing to send catalogues to new members
3. Singapore Coin Auctions: Taisei-Balswin-Gillo catalogue 20 in two parts for an auction on 23 February 1995 at the Raffles City Convention Centre, Singapore. The auction contained a good range of Chinese, Indian and other Far Eastern material and the RJ Ford collection of colonial coins of Ceylon.

### Forgeries of Chinese Coins

A situation is developing in the trade of traditional Chinese coins which is causing alarm to collectors, dealers and scholars alike and posing a real threat to both the trade and the hobby. We write to draw it to the attention of all ONS members who are not yet aware of this new danger.

During the last two years an increasing number of forgeries of this series have been appearing on the market. During the last year we have been shown a large range of such material by collectors and dealers in Great Britain and Europe. We hear similar rumours from the USA. The forgeries are not restricted to the coins of any particular period, but range in time from knife and spade coins of the pre-Qin period down to cash coins of the Qing dynasty. They also include both common and rare coins, from issues normally retailing under US\$10 up to coins which should cost more than US\$1000.

The material seems to be coming from the Far East and has been reported to us particularly as purchased from Hong Kong. It appears to be a consequence of the growing interest in ancient coins within China which seems to be outstripping the supply. The forgers are stepping in to match the demand. In some cases, extremely common coins are doctored to look like less common ones, but mostly the pieces are newly made. Their entry into the European and other coin markets is probably a spill-over from the growing market within China. The prices at which they are offered are often below the usual European prices and hence the in-flow.

The majority of these forgeries pose a real threat to the inexperienced collector because they are normally expertly patinated to look genuinely old and they are closely based on the designs of genuine coins, copied, for example, from well established catalogues such as Ding Fubao's *Lidai Guqian Tushuo* (also known as Ting Fu Pao's *Illustrated Catalogue of Ancient Coins of Past Ages*). Distinguishing them from the original is not an easy thing, but there are characteristic mistakes made by the forgers. Coins under suspicion should not be judged on the basis of patina or style, other considerations have to be taken into account. The only way to be certain of the status of any coin in the series is by comparing it in all respects, other than the purely subjective assessment of patina and style, with similar coins of known authenticity.

Joe Cribb and Helen Wang, British Museum, London.

## OTHER NEWS

### ANS Seminar Programme

The American Numismatic Society has announced a second year of Saturday afternoon seminars, which in 1995 will include two sessions on Islamic coinage led by Michael L Bates, Curator of Islamic Coins. One is for beginners and the other for advanced collectors and scholars, but both are open to anyone with an interest in the history and archaeology of the Muslim world. They will take place on a Saturday from 13.00 to 15.00 and each will be limited to 15 members in order to permit the examination of coins and to allow free discussion. Participants will be admitted on a first-come first-served basis, so it is wise to enrol early. For information or to enroll, call the Society on 212 2234-3130. There is a fee of \$15 for each seminar.

#### 25 March 1995: *Collecting Islamic Coins*

The session will describe and show the resources for Islamic coin collectors (manuals, catalogues, histories and reference tables, organisations, dealers). Interesting areas of specialisation and interesting ways to organise a collection will be discussed. With real Islamic coins in their hands, the members will learn how easy it is to read the necessary inscriptions.

#### 21 October 1995: *The Arab-Sasanian Coinage of Iran in the Seventh Century*

The coinage of Iran in the half-century after it was conquered by the Arabs has puzzled and fascinated scholars and collectors for two centuries. The coins have mint names, dates, officials' names and various religious inscriptions, and yet many of them cannot be "identified". Their promise as historical sources has not been fulfilled because of the many problems of reading and interpretation that they present. Recent research, however, has resolved some of these problems. It has suddenly become possible to understand the general evolution of the series. The seminar will describe the new classification, but elementary instruction in the series will be included according to the needs of the group.

The American Numismatic Society Committee on Islamic and South Asian Coins has announced that its annual prize for the best book on Islamic coinage has been awarded to Dr Lutz Ilisch for *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen, IVa Bilad ash-Sham I: Palästina*, published by Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, Tübingen, Germany.

This publication was described in an earlier Newsletter.

### Islamic Magic and Geomancy

At a study day held on 20 January 1995 at the British Museum, five papers were presented on aspects of magic found in the Islamic world. Two described "magic bowls", two were related to coin-like artifacts, and one introduced as Islamic geomancer. Dr Savage-Smith from Oxford, described a series of shallow bowls, mainly in metal but a few of Chinese porcelain, that had extracts from the Holy Koran in Arabic script on the inside. She explained that these were used in connection with the belief that such phrases could generate curative powers in liquids coming into contact with them. Some bowls had a small raised "table" in the centre on which pieces of paper or papyrus with similar writing were burnt to further enhance the power of the liquids. Some bowls were decorated with "magic squares" -- matrices of numbers which gave the same totals whichever way they were added together. Dr Kind of Kassel had studied one particular bowl in the British Museum which had a large number of the squares engraved between the script. He described the way in which the numbers could be interpreted if each were assigned to an Arabic letter, following the old sequence of the Arabic alphabet.

In contrast, Dr Robert Irwin of London introduced Ibn Zunbal, a sixteenth century Egyptian occultist who lived through the Ottoman conquest of Egypt by Selim the Grim. His writings have been little esteemed by historians but Dr Irwin suggested that, if considered as novels, they provided a valuable contemporary account of life and beliefs at that time, especially the part played by official geomancers.

Dr Venetia Porter of the British Museum presented examples of Islamic talismans. Some were coin-like objects, including Indian coins in the names of Jinns, others seals, and some were written on paper. Their common factor was the use of Arabic letters and words, such as the so-called "mysterious letters" and words from the Koran, the Seal of Solomon, Hebrew-like names and so on; many of these seemed to have no coherent meaning. She suggested that other artifacts which had undeciphered Arabic inscriptions might also prove to be talismans. Finally, Joe Cribb, also of the British Museum, showed a series of amulets from Malaysia and Java and related the grotesque figures on them to the shadow puppets still found in Bali and elsewhere.

Some 30 people attended this fascinating introduction to the survival in the Islamic world of belief in the powers of the supernatural.

MRB

### Some Rare Indo-Greek Coins

A hoard, now known as the Haripur hoard, was reportedly unearthed during some building excavations last year and it contained a great many rarities and new types among Indo-Greek and early Indo-Scythic coins. The hoard was rapidly dispersed and many coins went into private collections in Pakistan, whilst others appeared on the markets of Europe, the USA and Japan. The known coins of Artemidoros were multiplied several times over and it would seem that all types now exist for this king and possibly were issued for all contemporary kings, viz. Diademed bust right, Helmeted bust right, Spear-thrusting diademed bust left and Helmeted spear-thrusting bust left. If there are different reverses, then it would seem that each obverse was coupled with each reverse. So many new types have been found that they warrant a new listing and this will be done by Osmund Bopearachchi in the future. Some of the types were listed by RC Senior on his sales list in late 1994. A selection is presented below, with comments by Mr Senior.

Coin 52:



monogram



This is a rare tetradrachm of Heliocles II bearing the above monogram not previously known on this type.

Coin 64:



monogram



This is a drachm of the rare king Menander Dikaiou bearing the above monogram, not seen on this type before.

Coins 67, 72 and 76



These coins all bear a new, unique monogram for Artemidoros. The last two types, Spear-thruster and Horseman reverse are both otherwise unlisted for this ruler.

Coin 70:



monogram



This tetradrachm of Artemidoros with the above monogram and helmeted bust was previously unknown.

Coin 71:



This tetradrachm of Artemidoros with its spear-thruster obverse is not in BN or any other publication.

Coin 74:



monogram



This tetradrachm of Artemidoros bears a helmeted bust on the obverse and Nike right on the reverse. The monogram is otherwise known only from a unique drachm of BN6 series in the British Museum.

Coin 75:



This is another, hitherto unknown, type of tetradrachm for Artemidoros. It depicts a helmeted spear-thruster obverse.



Coin 81



monograms



This is a tetradrachm of Apollodotus II with two monograms on the reverse. The left monogram is associated with Taxila but the right one is more problematic. Until now it was not known for the "Eastern Group" of Indo-Greek kings. Archebios, Amyntas, Heliocles II, Strato and the two ephemeral kings Menander II and Polyxenos all used it but the main user was Maues, the rival of Apollodotus II and founder of the Indo-Scythic kingdom. One logical conclusion might be that *both* monograms were used in Taxila (two workshops) and that they were united in this issue. It could also be that one mint was inoperable for some reason and coinage was struck at Taxila for both mints due to some circumstance such as the Indo-Scythic take-over. The only other coin to use both monograms is the even more remarkable coin that comes next!

Coin 82:



monograms as for coin 81

This tetradrachm of Apollodotus II has the same obverse as the previous coin but on the reverse the king is seated on a horse facing right. He wears "Parthian" dress and has his right hand outstretched as on many Indo-Scythic and Indo-Parthian coins. This coin seems to be of billon and the monograms are in the reverse position compared to coin 81. The most remarkable thing about the coin is the kharosthi legend. This reads *MAHARAJASA MAHATASA (---)SA*. The coin is in poor condition and corroded giving a cast appearance.

*Maharajasa* is the usual title for most Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythic rulers. *Mahatasa* is used by Maues, Azilises and Azes but of the Indo-Greeks only Hippostratos certainly used it, in conjunction with his other titles and personal name. It occurs on some posthumous coppers in the name of Hermaios which I would place at the time of Kujula Kadphises and possibly on the unique drachm of Thrason. I am not certain about the latter, because when I discovered it amongst a hoard of Menander coins I was not able to make an accurate copy of the inscription. It may read *Mahatakasa*, a different form which occurs on coins of Eukratides. In other words, we have a title that is almost exclusively one of Indo-Scythian usage and was *not* used by Apollodotus. When we come to the personal name we can see that there is no way that Apollodotus would fit. It is a name of 3 or possibly 4 askaras at most. The first is *Ra* (though it could be *Tra*, the lower part of the askara is off the coin) but the next one (two?) is missing because there has been a mount. This was later removed, leaving a hole where the letter(s) should be. We have no king's name that would fit and there is no precedent for a joint coin, especially not one between the Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians. If the word was *Tratarasa* (saviour) we would have the legend *the king, the great saviour*. Apart from the additional title *Rajarajasa* this is the legend used by Soter Megas, the Kushan ruler. The lack of the title *Rajarajasa/Rajadirajasa* (King of kings) seems to preclude a direct Indo-Scythian link because this title was used by *all* the Indo-Scythians but not by any of the Indo-Greeks. What is this coin then? One possibility is that it was a medal, perhaps commemorating a victory over (or alliance with) the Indo-Scythians. Another possibility is that it is an ancient concoction, and maybe *is* a cast. But the reverse is not a known one and *is* linked to the previous coin, with which it is said to have been found. Until a perfect specimen is found, we can only speculate.

### A Unique Gold Coin of the Utpala Dynasty of Kashmir by SK Shrivastva<sup>1</sup> and SC Gupta<sup>2</sup>

Study of the Kashmir coinage system does not yield any hard evidence of gold coins being in circulation after AD 883. It is believed that from the time of King Sankaravarmman (AD 883-902) onwards, the currency consisted exclusively of copper coins. But some rethinking on this issue has become necessary after the find of a gold coin in the personal collection of author Mr SC Gupta<sup>3</sup>, bearing the name Nandi Gupta, a king perhaps belonging to the Utpala dynasty, who ruled over Kashmir in the late tenth century.

The series of coins issued by Sankaravarmman represents a variant on the Kushan type, which marked the unique characteristic of Kashmir coinage from AD 78 onwards. The present gold coin belongs to the same stereotype, having a seated goddess on the obverse and a standing king on the reverse. It is, however, a late variety in which both arms of the goddess have been replaced by inscriptions. The coin as such bears the name *Na-ndi-gu-pta-(de-va)*, a king who reigned over Kashmir from AD 972-3 as recorded by Kalhana in his famous historical account, *Rajatarangini*.



The obverse depicts the figure of a seated goddess - an Indian version of goddess Ardoksho, later called Laxmi, adorned with heavy, round earrings (Kundalas) and the legend *na* on the left and *ndi-gu* on the right. The reverse shows the standing figure of a king with heavy ornaments and dressed in typical Kushana style in a peculiar skirt and frilled drawers. The right hand is likely placed on an unidentified object and the left hand on the thigh. The latter half of the king's name, *pta-(de-va)* appears lower down on the right.

The coin is struck from a circular die. The impression of the die is clearly visible on the edge on the reverse. The coin is in a very good state of preservation, though some minor changes in its appearance due to handling over many years cannot be ruled out. The gold is almost pure according to experts. Both motifs are identical to those which appear on the copper coins of King Nandi Gupta. It is, however, smaller

in size compared to the copper version by 2.02 mm, being 17.3 mm in diameter against 19.05 mm = 0.75 inches for the copper coins as published by Smith. The weight of the coin is 8.195 grams = 126.5 grains, which is within the prevailing system of coinage in the mediaeval period of Kashmir. It also indicates that the Kushan weight standard continued to be followed in its typical form.

In view of the above, there is good reason to believe that the gold coin in question is genuine and was struck in the 10th century by King Nandi Gupta.

During the reign of this king, a trusted courtier, Phalguna, discharged the affairs of the state. The queen mother, Didda, was engaged in the construction and restoration of various temples, monasteries and laying foundations for towns. No account of any political disturbances during this time occur in Rajatarangini. It indicates possible political stability and economic improvements in Kashmir at that time. It may also be possible that old commercial trade links were restored. This might have led to the issue of gold coins. The purity of the present coin may also suggest that gold coins were in use as a means of international exchange, which could account for its occurrence being extremely rare.

It may be mentioned that a gold coin bearing the name Suravarmmana<sup>4</sup> has been identified and attributed to the king of Kashmir ruling in AD 933-4. Typologically, it is quite different from the prevalent pictorial type of Kashmir currency during the tenth century. Thus its identification as a coin of Kashmir has yet to be proven.

#### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Ms Minoti Gupta for helping them find relevant publications for comparative study. Thanks are also due to Ms Chaya Shrivastva, who helped in various ways during the preparation of this paper. The authors are also grateful to Prof. BD Dutta, Ex-Vice Chancellor, West Bengal University for helpful suggestions in the compilation of the paper.

1. Curator, Archaeological Museum, Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, UP, India.
2. Owner of the coin.
3. The gold coin was obtained by Mr Gupa by way of ancestral property. It was learnt from his father that the coin had been passed down from generation to generation in his family as an auspicious coin and a bearer of good fortune. However, he has not been able to ascertain how and when it came into the possession of his forefathers.
4. This coin is in the possession of Mr N G Rhodes.

#### References

1. Bamzai, PN Kaul, 1962 *A history of Kashmir*, Metropolitan Book Co. (P) Ltd. Dehli.
2. Brown, C A *Coins of ancient India*.
3. Cunnigham, A 1967 *Coins of mediaeval India*. Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, Delhi.
4. Gupta, PL 1969 *Coins* National Book Trust
5. Devendra Handa 1993 *A unique gold coin of king Suravarmmana I of Kashmir* ONS Newsletter
6. Ray, HC 1973 *The dynastic history of Northern India*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publications (P) Ltd. Delhi.
7. Ray, SC 1970 *Early history and culture of Kashmir*, Mushiram Manoharlal Publishers (Pvt) Ltd. Delhi
8. Smith, VA 1972 *Coins of ancient India*, Indological Book House, Varanasi.
9. Stein, MA 1961 *Kalhan's Rajatarangini*, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi.

#### Editor's note:

A gold coin of Jaga Deva (AD 1193-1213), weighing 10.37 grams, was in the Skanda Collection auctioned in 1991 (lot 165). This was described as depicting a primitive rendering of the traditional Kashmir type with standing king on the obverse, enthroned Ardoxsho on the reverse. The cataloguer's view was that such gold coins were more likely to be special presentation pieced rather than a regular monetary issue. Do members know of any other such gold coins in this series?

#### Indian Miscellany

##### Some fractional tankas of the Sultans of Bengal

It was not so long ago that it was very rare to come across any fractional tankas of this series. In recent years, however, with the increase in interest in the series, especially in Bengal itself, more and more specimens are coming to light. Many of the types remain very rare. They are often struck from specially prepared dies, though some are clearly struck from tanka dies. Care needs to be taken in the latter case to ensure that the coins are not full tankas that have been fraudulently ground down.

The following four coins are published by permission of Sanjay Rampuria.

1. Square half tanka of Shams-ud-din Ilyas Shah (AH 743-758)

obverse

reverse

السلطان العادل  
شمس الدنيا الدين  
ابو المظفر الياض  
تشاء السلطان



سكندر الثاني  
يحيى الخليفة ناصر  
امير المؤمنين

Al-Sultan al-'adil Shams al-dunya wa'l din Abu'l-Muzaffar Ilyas Shah al-Sultan

Sikandar al-thani Yamin al-Khilafat Nasir Amir al-Mu'minin

Size approx. 19x19mm; weight 5.2 grams.

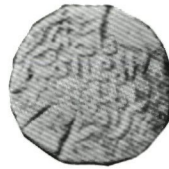
This coin seems to have been struck from standard tanka dies of this common type. The weight and square shape, however, are most unusual.

2. A half tanka of Ghiyas-ud-din A'zam Shah (AH 792-813)

obverse

reverse

الموید بتائید الرحمن  
غیاث الدنیا والدين  
ابو المظفر اعظم  
شاه السلطان



ناصر  
الاسلام و  
المسلمین یمنین  
امیر المؤمنین

Al-muwayyidu ba-tayyid al-Rahman Ghiyas al-dunya  
wa'l-din Abu'l-Muzaffar A'zam Shah al-Sultan

Nasir al-Islam wa'l-Muslimin Yamin Amir al-  
Mu'minin

Size 22mm; weight 4.9 grams. Karim type D

3. A half tanka of Shihab-ud-din Bayazid Shah (AH 814-817)

obverse

reverse

شهاب  
الدنیا والدين  
ابو المظفر بايزيد...  
شاه السلطان



ناصر  
امیر  
المؤمنین  
خلد...

Shihab al-dunya wa'l-din Abu'l-Muzaffar Bayazid  
Shah al-Sultan

Nasir Amir al-Mu'minin Khallada...

Size 22mm; weight 5.3 grams. Similar to Karim type 2 but with shorter reverse inscription, part of which is not clear from the photograph.

4. A half tanka of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Shah (AH837-864)

obverse

reverse

ناصر الدنیا  
والدين ابو المظفر  
محمود شاه  
السلطان



الموید بتائید  
الرحمت خلیفة  
بالجمعة البرهان

Nasir al-dunya wa'l-din abu'l Muzaffar Mahmud Shah  
Sultan

Al-Muwayyidu ba-tayyid al-Rahman Khalifat Allah bil-  
hujjat wa'l-burhan

An unidentified copper dam of Akbar

Bernd Becker has sent a photograph of a copper dam weighing 20.78 grams. Only part of the date is visible, and is preceded by the expression *fi tarikh*. Part of the mint-name is clearly visible on the coin but I have not been able to identify it. Can anyone help?

obverse

reverse

فی تاریخ  
من  
ضرب



محمود  
شاه

**The so-called Dar Jhang rupee of the Sikhs**

Bernd Becker writes: in his catalogue of Sikh coins, Rodgers records against this coin "Amritsar 1874". He then remarks "In the lam of Akal is Dar Jhang? This was sold to me as a Jhang rupee. It has Sri on it as on Amritsar coins". Obviously Rodgers had his doubts as to whether this was indeed a coin of Jhang.

For a long time, the Lahore museum specimen was the only published coin of this type and is presumably the coin recorded by Rodgers in his catalogue. Another specimen was recorded in the White King sale in Amsterdam in 1905 but unfortunately no photograph was provided and the whereabouts of this coin is not known. The next example turned up among the Amritsar rupees of the Sheesh Mahal Museum at Patiala. In 1992 RC Senior published a square rupee of this type in ONS Newsletter 131.

In his book *The coins of the Sikhs* H Herrli writes "the authors of the Sheesh Mahal Museum catalogue saw a personal name at the place of Rodgers' *dar Jhang*. Although this reading seems to agree better with the fragments of the inscription visible on the Sheesh Mahal coin, its correctness is still far from evident. Even if the reading of the words in the lam of Akal is still fraught with uncertainty, their function seems to be fairly clear. They do not stand for a mint name, but are simply another mark which, like many pictorial marks occurring on the rupees, is connected with the organisation of the mint".

On all of the above-mentioned coins the additional inscription in the lam of Akal and the following word are very fragmentary and peripherally struck or nearly worn off. I am now able to present a better specimen, weighing 11.10 grams, where the legend is clearer. Unfortunately the extreme left hand part of the legend is still not visible, so a complete rendering of the script remains illusive. I understand, however, that a small group of these rupees has come to light; if any owner/ member can throw some more light on this puzzle, I would be pleased to hear from them.



**A rupee of 'Alamgir II with an unusual mint-mark**



mint-mark

The rupee illustrated here was found amongst a somewhat mixed lot of rupees, the bulk of which were issues of the Nawabs of Surat and the Nawabs of Broach. The unusual mint-mark can be seen in the loop of the letter *sin* of *jalus* on the reverse. It comprises a final letter 'ain and a sword. Unfortunately, the mint-name is off the coin as is the date. The regnal year 5 can, however, be clearly seen. Stylistically, the coin is similar to other coins issued by the afore-mentioned nawabs. Does any member have another coin of this type with the mint-name on?

**The Tulip hoard of 9th century Assamese coins**

by SK Bose and NG Rhodes

On 27 July 1994, at about 3.30 pm, a tea garden labourer, Rameswar Tanti, while digging in the earth to erect a bamboo pole on the Tulip Tea Estate, came across an earthenware pitcher full of coins, at a depth of about eighteen inches. This estate is about 25 miles west north west of Tezpur, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river. After being kept on the garden by a sardar for two nights, the coins were taken to a jeweller at Dhekiajuli, who declared them to be made of copper, and of no metallic value. The labourers then decided to hand the coins to the manager of the garden, Mr Binode Bist, who promptly informed the police and transferred the whole hoard to the local police station, after apparently confirming that it weighed a total of 27 kg.



va

ha

An initial examination of the coins has now been completed and most of the coins are uniface and roughly circular, with a single Brahmi character, either *ha* or *va*, as shown in the drawings above. Discrete enquiries in the area revealed some more pieces which, although not handed to the police, may have been originally found in the same hoard. The total number of pieces has now been assessed at 2089, made up as follows:

	Ha	Va	Ta	unread	not yet examined	total
With police	739	1067		240		2046
In private hands	9	9	1		24	43
Total	748	1076	1	240	24	2089

Another hoard of thirty three coins of the same types, found in 1977 at the Dhulapadung Tea Estate, also near Tezpur, has been published by Dr RD Choudhury<sup>1</sup>, but very few other peices of these types appear to be known.

Dr Choudhury tentatively attributed the coins to Harjaravarman (c815-32) and Vanamalavarman (c832-55) of the Mlechchha dynasty. The coin with *ta* in Brahmi, also has the legend *Ty'asia* in Kamrupa Prakrit, a script apparently often found in 9th century Assamese inscriptions. This piece was probably struck by Tyagasimha, the last king of the Mlechchha dynasty, who is thought to have ruled during the final decade of the 9th century.

The coins weigh between 1.6 and 20.9 grams, the diameter varies from 10mm to 15.4mm, and thickness varies from 0.7mm to 4.3mm. Further analysis is, however, required before it is possible to determine whether this remarkable variation in size indicates that more than one denomination circulated at the same time, or whether the coinage declined in standard over the period of issue. Another question that further analysis of the material may shed light on is whether the coins were struck continuously throughout the second half of the ninth century, during the reigns of the later kings of the Mlechchha dynasty.

In any event, this hoard has brought to light a series of coins that was hardly known earlier, and it will shed considerable light on this period of Assamese history, about which very little is known. It is the only coinage known to have been issued in Assam prior to the sixteenth century, and is the only base metal coinage known there prior to the advent of the British influence in the nineteenth century. Once more detailed analysis of the coins has been completed, the hoard will be published in detail, but it was thought that readers would be interested in this initial report, which is based on a paper read by SK Bose at the 15th session of the North East India History Association at Doimukh.

1. *On the newly discovered coins from Dhulapadung Tea Estate*, Coins and Economy of North Eastern States of India, NSI, Varanasi (1981), pp.7-11.

## Unidentified Sikh mints--proof of the existence of the mint at Nimak

by Jyoti Rai ©

We are indebted to C.J. Rodgers who wrote one of the first detailed accounts on the coins of the Sikhs in AD 1881.<sup>1</sup> He gave an overall picture of Sikh coinage beginning with the Misls to the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849 AD. He writes about several Sikh mints and in a note at the end of his article mentions having obtained "several rupees struck at Pind Dadan Khan". Ever since then the possibility of the existence of a mint under the name of NAMAK or NIMAK has continued to puzzle numismatists.

Again in 1894 AD, in the *Catalogue of The Coins of the Sikhs*, Part II (*Miscellaneous Muhamadan coins*), C.J. Rodgers refers to coin No. 25, on page 189. He makes the observation that the inscription on this coin is "NAMAK", and states that this stands for "Pind Dadan Khan in the salt range (1904 S.)".

Nearly a hundred years later, K.W. Wiggins and S. Goron, in a well researched and detailed account of the various Sikh mints discussed this mint in the Oriental Numismatic Society Information Sheet No. 26 dated March 1984: "some Sikh rupees allegedly bear the word Nimak as the name of the minting place. No such place will be found in the Punjab. No information concerning the issue of these coins has been discovered and the question why they were struck for a very limited period at Pind Dadan Khan is a matter of conjecture."

Later, in 1993, Hans Herrli in his "The Coins of the Sikhs", one of the most comprehensive and welcome works on Sikh coins to date, examines Nimak coins in the chapter "Unidentified Sikh Mint A", and concludes, "The rupees 03.01.04 and 03.02.04 were struck during the very last and extremely troubled years of the Sikh state and it would not come as too great a surprise if one day they were found to be just another special issue of Nanak Shahis of the Amritsar mint."

AR Rupee  
Date: VS 1904  
Wt. 11.2g  
Dia. 23 mm



AR rupee  
Date: VS 1905  
Wt. 11.1g  
Dia. 24 mm



Obv. Sikka zad bar har do alam fazl Sachcha Sahib ast  
Fath Tegh-i-Guru Gobind Singh Shah Nanak Wahib ast  
Rev. Nimak Shahi  
∩ of zarb?  
Takht Akal Bakht  
Julus maimanat manus

In this paper I propose to prove conclusively:-

- The existence of a mint at Pind Dadan Khan.
- The reasons why the mint was established.
- That Pind Dadan Khan was also known as Nimak.

I will also seek to provide answers to related questions as to why a weak Durbar, with no significant power or authority, set up a new mint. And, more important, why would the British, the real powers behind the throne, consent to the establishment of a new mint during the waning period of the Sikh state.

### History

Pind Dadan Khan, situated on the west bank of the river Jhelum, was the main town in the salt range. Its principal economic activity was the mining of salt, '*nimak*' in Persian.

This town first came into Sikh hands in 1764 AD, when Charat Singh Sukarchakia (the grand-father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh), took control under a treaty with the Chief of that district, Sahib Khan Gakhar. In 1797 Ranjit Singh invaded Pind Dadan Khan defeating the Muslim chief. Later, in the 1830's, Maharaja Ranjit Singh farmed out the salt mines, including Pind Dadan Khan, to Raja Gulab Singh. Pind Dadan Khan returned to the hands of the Lahore Durbar in 1847.

During 1846, the period when boundaries were being demarcated between Kashmir and the Lahore Durbar, several currencies with varying rates of exchange were in circulation in the Punjab. Some were valued at 12 annas to the rupee and some 14 annas. The Goonduh and Mihurabee rupees, for instance, being only 13 annas 3 pice and 14 annas 3 pice respectively.

This multiplicity of currencies and consequent exchange rates caused administrative problems in the collection of revenue. In order to simplify matters, it was decided by the British to withdraw the existing rupees in the area and replace them with Nanak Shahi or Lahore rupees. In this context I have come across official correspondence which I will quote as we go along.

From Lt. Col. H.M. Lawrence, C.B., Resident at Lahore and Agent Governor General N.W.F., to Under Secretary of to the Government India.<sup>2</sup>

"Subject – Mint operations in the Punjab. Abstract. In reply to circular letter No. 19, dated 8th Jan. 1847, with enclosures from the Court of Directors Lieut. Col. H. Lawrence etc. submits a report on the mint operations in the Punjab dealing with the points noticed by the Hon'ble Court, viz., 1st, influence of our currency on that of neighbouring Independent States, and 2nd, the possibility or otherwise of reducing the latter to uniformity."

By September 1847, matters on re-coinage had progressed sufficiently for the following letters to be written.

"Sept. 24, 1847. A roobakaree was received from the officiating Resident (J. Lawrence) requesting the Durbar to stop the circulation of Goonduh and Zeman Shahee (bears a butta of 6 to 9 pies per rupee) rupees which are now in use in Huzara and other districts and to introduce the Nanakshahee rupee in lieu of them. The future revenue collections in those districts are to be made in the latter coin."<sup>3</sup>

From J. Lawrence. 21st Sept. 1847.

"Durbar held at Anarkulee... I requested that the circulation of the Goonduh (0.13.3) and Mihurabee (0.14.3) rupees in the district of Rawalpinddee might<sup>4</sup> be stopped and the Nanakshahee rupees circulated in lieu of them."

22nd. Sept. 1847. Letter No. 153 from J. Lawrence Esq. To Comr. & Supdt., Trans Sutlej States on duty at Lahore.<sup>5</sup>

"Subject: Coin in which the revenue of Hazara should be paid. Mr. J. Lawrence, on duty at Lahore, informs Captain J. Abbott, Boundary Comr. in charge of Hazara that the Durbar has consented to establish a mint at Pind Dadan Khan for the re-coinage of all short weight rupees and miscellaneous coins such as the Goonda and Zaman Shahi rupees. Suggests that in making the revenue settlement of Hazara, Capt. Abbott should determine that the revenue for the ensuing year be paid in Goonda or Nanakshahi rupees and hereafter in the latter coinage."

The following two excerpts show further directions issued by the authorities for the establishment of a mint at Pind Dadan Khan for the conversion of other currencies.

Sept 27, 1847.<sup>6</sup>

"Bhag Singh Vakeel, said that Mr. J. Lawrence had requested the Durbar to stop circulation of Muhammad Shahee, Zemanshahees, Goonduh and Mihurabee rupees in the district of Pind Dadan Khan, and to introduce the Chitta Nanakshahee instead. Misr. Saheb Diyal was accordingly directed to superintend the introduction of the latter rupee, for which purpose a mint at Pind Dadan Khan will be established."

21st. Oct. 1847.<sup>7</sup>

"Sirdar Chuttar Singh and Bhaee Dul Singh and others are ordered to send all the Gundahshahie and Zemanshahie rupees in their possession to the Pind Dadan Khan treasury, whence they will be converted to Nanukshahies."

Further evidence that a mint was indeed established at Pind Dadan Khan is available from Dr. Andrew Fleming, of the Punjab Geological Survey. During his trip to Pind Dadan Khan, not only does he visit the mint there but, in addition, gives us an excellent description of the working of this mint. This very significant entry appears in his diary in 1848.<sup>8</sup>

"March 22nd. Pind Dadan Khan Received visits from Missers Rula Ram and Gyan Chand who have yielded me every assistance in their power in the prosecution of my investigation of the range of hills. Visited the mint here, which is under the superintendence of the former. Silver is collected in all directions in the shape of old rupees, bangles and silver ornaments, which after being refined are converted into the new Lahore Rupee. At present the silver from which rupees are being manufactured, are Mahmoud Shah Rupees from the Hazara and countries to the North, and of the value of about 12 annas. These contain copper and lead, which is separated from them previous to them being converted into the new rupees."

Dr. Fleming gives a very detailed description of the methods employed for the refining and minting of the rupees. I have provided extracts from his diary in appendix A, which provides a rare account of the minting process.

Now that we have complete evidence that a mint did exist at Pind Dadan Khan, it remains somewhat paradoxical that these Nanak Shahi rupees do not have the name Pind Dadan Khan on them, so as to identify the mint town.

These Nanak Shahis, 1904 and 1905 VS, for want of better justification, have been very tentatively and hesitantly attributed to Pind Dadan Khan. Yet, at the appropriate place they bear the mint name "Nimak". This has caused confusion as to the veracity and accuracy of their attribution.

Any doubts, however, may now be quickly dispelled, for Pind Dadan Khan and Nimak are one and the same place! To substantiate this statement, I reproduce evidence from the District and State Gazetteers of the undivided Punjab (Jhelum District), Volume XXVIII A 1904 AD page 52. Also Gazetteer of 1930 page 291 :-

"Pind Dadan Khan, in the period preceeding annexation was under the name Nimak or 'salt', a Sikh mint town."

In the light of the above, it is now clear that not only was C.J. Rodgers correct, but also the reasons why he read the inscription on the coin(s) to be "NAMAK" and his statement that this "stands for Pind Dadan Khan in the salt range".

To conclude, the question why these coins were only minted in 1904 and 1905 VS is simply due to the fact that the mint, itself, was established in 1847 AD, the purpose being to recoin old currencies into new Lahore rupees or Nanak Shahis of very high silver content "almost pure silver".

In 1849 AD, the Punjab was annexed by the British and by June of that year most of the Sikh mints, including the one at Pind Dadan Khan, were closed down.

#### Bibliography:

1. Rodgers C.J. 'On the coins of the Sikhs' JASB, Vol.L. 1881
2. Press Lists of old Records in the Punjab Secretariat Vol.IX. Lahore Agency and Residency 1846-1847. No.90. Page 304.
3. Lahore Political Diaries 1846-1849. Published 1909. Punjab Government Records Political diaries of the Agent to the Governor General, North-West Frontier and Resident at Lahore. 1st. Jan. 1847 to 4th March 1848. Page 295.
4. Lahore Political Diaries Page 293.
5. Press Lists. Page 435. No. 616.
6. Lahore Political Diaries. Page 300.
7. Lahore Political Diaries. Page 321.
8. RASB Vol. XVIII Part II July-Dec. 1849. Diary of a 'Trip to Pind Dadud Khan and the salt range.' by Andrew Fleming M.D. Assist. Surgeon 7th N.I. on deputation to Pind Dadan Khan (communicated by Sir H. H. Elliot Secretary Government of India). Pages 667-8.

Note: \* Butta = Battá (Hindi). Discount on coins of short weight.

#### Appendix A

1849 Trip to Pind Dadud Khan and the Salt Range.

March 22nd. – Pind Dadud Khan. — Received visits from Missers Rula Ram and Gyan Chand, who have yielded me every assistance in their power in the prosecution of my investigation of the range of hills. Visited the mint here, which is under the superintendence of the former. Silver is collected in all directions in the shape of old rupees, bangles and silver ornaments, which after being refined are converted into the new Lahore Rupee. At present the silver from which rupees are manufactured, are Mahmoud Shah Rupees from the Hazara and countries to the north, and of the value of about 12 annas. These contain copper and lead, which is separated from them previous to their being converted into the new rupees. This is effected by the process of cupellation, and which is performed in a very simple but effective way. A hole is dug in the earth according to the size of the cupel to be made, into this hole a quantity of wood ashes is thrown, moistened with water and wrought up into a saucer-shaped vessel, its sides projecting above the level of the ground. On these are placed two pieces of fire clay so as to increase the depth of the cupel and encircle its mouth, except for about 3 inches at one side, in which is inserted the mouth of a tube connected with a mussuck to act as a bellows. This apparatus being prepared, the cupel is filled with charcoal, on which after it is

ignited the silver to be refined is thrown, and in the case of Mahmoud Shah Rupees, an equal weight of lead is thrown in along with them so as during its oxidation to carry all the copper into the substance of the cupel, and leave the pure silver behind. The experiment we saw performed was on Rs. 1000, and the operation was finished in two hours, during which time an intense heat was kept up by the bellows. The lead and copper are afterwards extracted from the cupel by ordinary means, and contain a little silver, probably in consequence of the quantity of lead used being in excess of the proper proportion to the amount of copper contained in the assay.




The silver being obtained of sufficient purity to constitute the new rupees, which are said to be pure silver, it is cut into bars about the breadth of a rupee and handed over to an artificer, who cuts these into the necessary weights to constitute the rupees. This being done, the rough bits of silver are heated to redness on hot charcoal, and when hot are beaten on an anvil with a round-headed hammer into the shape and size of the standard rupee. In this state they are handed over to a man who finishes them by impressing the necessary inscription, which is done on a die of a most simple description, being an anvil with a round and highly tempered steel surface, on which the inscription is inscribed in reverse. On this the rupee is placed, and on it a punch with a round and highly tempered steel face, on which the inscription to be impressed on the upper side of the rupee is carved. The punch being applied to the rupee, a smart blow from a heavy die is given by a man who stands in front of the one in charge of the die, and who holds the punch in his left hand and a handful of raw rupees in his right, the lower die being firmly fixed in a strong case. In this way 40 rupees were passed through the die well engraved, in one minute, and the artificer said that on an average he could engrave 1500 per hour. From 1000 Mahmoud Shah rupees, 750 new Lahore rupees are manufactured.

**Mysore. A few peculiarities in the 19th century coinage.**

by Ken Wiggins

The series of copper coins struck in Mysore between 1833 and 1843 comprising 20, 10, 5 and 2½ cash pieces are fairly well known and are not uncommon. There are, however, a few strange errors that occur on some of the 10, 5 and 2½ cash coins.

The obverse of these pieces has a lion to the left with the date below and the word *Sri* in Kanarese above. The reverse inscription is as follows:

 = Krishna (Kanarese).  
 = Mysore (Persian)  
 = Zarb (Persian)

The denomination is to the left of the word Mysore in Roman numerals ie 10, 5 or 2 || (=2½).

I have noted the following errors:-

- |   |                                   |                  |       |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------|
| 1 | On the 10 cash piece of 1841      | 5 instead of 10  | Fig 1 |
| 2 | On the 10 cash piece of 1842      | 01 instead of 10 | Fig 2 |
| 3 | On the 10 cash piece of 1843      | 01 instead of 10 | Fig 3 |
| 4 | On a 5 cash piece (date off flan) | 10 instead of 5  | Fig 3 |
| 5 | On a 2½ cash piece of 1840        | 5 instead of 2   | Fig 4 |

The errors which occur on 1, 4 and 5 must have been the result of using the wrong die for certain flans or the wrong flan for the die. The other errors must be the fault of the die cutter.



**A newly discovered gongsi cash coin**

by TD Yih and J de Kreek

Very recently one of us was offered by Mr J Linggen, our Regional ONS Secretary, a hitherto unknown gongsi cash piece for study. The results of the study are set out below

**General Description**

The borders of the outer rim are slightly raised. This gives the impression that this outer rim consists of two concentric rings. As usual, the casting is rather crude. This results, for instance, in the characters *Liu* and *Da* on the obverse and reverse respectively being misshapen. At about 11 o'clock there is a casting hole.

**Obverse**

From top to bottom and from left to right, the obverse bears the Chinese legends *Liu fen gongsi* 六分公司 meaning *Six shares gongsi*. Very remarkable is the writing from left to right of the word *gongsi*. In the literature about gongsi pieces from the former Dutch East Indies<sup>1</sup> and those from the Malayan states<sup>2</sup> the writing is always from right to left. In addition the obverse bears at about 2 o'clock, just above the character *si*, the counter-mark *Yuan* 元.

**Reverse**

The reverse legend is rotated 90 degrees with respect to the obverse. Tentatively, the legends read from top to bottom *Da ji* 大吉, meaning *Great luck*. The second character *ji* is not very legible because of the obverse chopmark

**Measurements**

Below are mentioned some characteristics as well as the metallic composition as analysed by XRF.

Code	Wt (g)	dia. (mm)	H (mm)	inner hole (mm)	outer rim (mm)	inner rim (mm)
L01	6.151	27.20	4.45	1.85	3.85	1.30
%	SN	PB	CU	FE		
	70	29	0.4	0.3		

## Place of origin

The obverse legends *six shares gongsi* is in line with the names used by the gongsis on the western coast of Borneo such as twelve and fifteen shares gongsi. Schaank<sup>3</sup> mentions on page 525 the existence of a gongsi named *Liu-fen-tou* the precursor of the *Shi-wu-fen* gongsi. On page 527, however, he mentions *Liu-fen-tou* as a place near Salinse, being the residence of the *Ying-he* gongsi, one of the seven gongsis known from the Larah region.

Stephanik<sup>4</sup> in his catalogue of the collection of the State Museum of Amsterdam mentions two gongsi pieced countermarked with the name of the *Yuan-he* gongsi, also one of the afore-mentioned gongsis. Possibly, the countermark *yuan* refers to this gongsi. Since only one specimen was available, only very preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. The amount of tin is about 2½ times the lead content resulting in a PB/SN ratio of 0.41. The lead content is clearly higher than that observed in Banka gongsi pieces, but lower than that observed for the Borneo gongsi *San-tiou-gou*.

To summarise, we can conclude that based on the present information, this piece most likely originates from the western coast of Borneo. The authors would welcome any information about gongsi cash pieces present in the collections of fellow ONS members.

1. T D Yih and J de Kreek, 'The gongsi cash pieces of western Borneo and Banka in the Ethnological Museum, Rotterdam.' *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1993, pp.171-96.

2. S. Singh, *The coins of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur, 1986.

3. S H Schaank, 'De kongsi's van Montrado.' *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal, Land en Volkenkunde* 34, 1893, pp.498-612.

4. J W Stephanik, *Geschiedkundige Catalogus der verzameling munten van Nederland, Bezittingen en Kolonien*, Amsterdam, 1888.



Gongsi cash



Silver tael

## The silver taels of the Douanes et Régies d'Indochine (1943-1945)<sup>1</sup> by François Thierry

In the year 1943, for various political, economic and financial reasons, an Opium Buying Board (Bureau d'Achat de l'Opium) under the General Direction of the Customs and Government Corporations of Indochina (Douanes et Régies d'Indochine, DR), was established in Hanoi. In the same year, Monsieur Laroche, the newly appointed director of this office, decided to produce a special currency to buy opium from the Meo tribes and other ethnic minorities, such as the Black Taïs of Son-La, the White Taïs of Lai-Chau, the Nungs of Yen-Bai; M. Laroche entrusted two DR officials with the task of making this currency: Head Customs Inspector Pascal Morani for the technical side, and Head Customs Inspector René Lafont for the financial side.

The first attempt was the casting of silver ingots, similar in shape and in weight to the two types used by the Meos and known as "silver bar" and "snake neck", and special moulds were made. But it quickly became clear that the newly established Hanoi Mint (139 boulevard Armand Rousseau, Hanoi) was unable to produce good ingots. Pascal Morani hit upon the idea of striking silver tokens. The Hanoi Mint official engraver, M. René Mercier, drew some designs from which M. Laroche selected a round token with the Chinese character *fu*, in two sizes, one tael (38 gr) and a half-tael (19 gr). These coins were struck at the Hanoi Mint and despatched to the Opium Buying Commissions (Commissions d'Achat de l'Opium, CAO) at the end of 1943 or the beginning of 1944, for the opium harvest of spring-summer 1944. But for two reasons, some ethnic minorities, and specially the Meo tribes, gave this type a cool reception: the Chinese character *fu* was not understood by the Meos, who are not Chinese-speaking but Lao-speaking, and the Lao inscription was grammatically wrong<sup>2</sup>. Then it was decided that the type must be modified. This time, Laroche and Morani established a special commission made up of students of ethnic minorities among whom was Prince Tougeu Lyfoung, brother of the king of the Meos of Xieng-Khouang. After long discussions, the pattern selected was a stag's head. The first dies were engraved by a great Vietnamese jeweller from Hanoi, but it was rejected because his stag was not a local one, but a European ten-tined stag copied from the famous *Larousse* illustrated dictionary and never seen by the Meos. The second die, also engraved by the jeweller, represented a local stag, *Cervus hippelaphus*, but because it was easy to mistake this stag for the *Cervus muntiacus*, or muntjak stag, which was very unlucky in the Meo mythology, this die was also rejected by the commission.

Then, Pascal Morani, exasperated by this delay, decided to take over the production himself. He personally drew the pattern of a six-tined stag (*Cervus aristotelis* or sambar stag) and himself engraved the die. The first attempt was disappointing because he engraved the die too deeply and the details were not visible on the first coins struck; he engraved a new die, but because he was unaccustomed to engraving metal, his graving tool scraped the die's field twice, making two scratches. Nevertheless, after receiving the commission's advice and Laroche's permission this die was used to strike silver taels. In order to make these taels seem thicker, the Hanoi Mint used a special technical process: the die was smaller than the flan and only struck the centre of the flan, which was fixed by a coining-ferrule. Then, when the flan was struck, the metal border rose. The raised rim, which was not struck by the die, is very characteristic, with a small depression in the middle.

The striking of this type began in late 1944, and some boxes were despatched to some CAOs as early as the end of the year: Monsieur Devaux, a former French Résident in Sam-Neua (North Laos), was present when the boxes for the CAO of Sam-Neua arrived from Hanoi; he was present at the opening of the boxes and he actually held the new tael in his hands. The striking was stopped by the Japanese coup of 9 March 1945. Numerous other details about the striking and circulation of these coins can be read in the above mentioned article. But let me now answer my friend Scott Seman's questions (see *ONS Newsletter* 142). When I showed all the coins (the coins, not pictures), character *fu* tael and half-tael, two-tined stag head tael, six-tined round muzzle stag head tael (left-hand figure in *ONS Newsletter* 141), and six-tined pointed muzzle stag head tael (right-hand figure in *ONS Newsletter* 141), to Pascal Morani and Prince Tougeu, both testified that their tael is the round muzzled stag head tael that was recognisable from the type of stag head and from the special raised rim. They also told me that they had never before seen the second type with struck rim and Morani remembers clearly that he made two scratches. Why then do the other coins have the same scratches? In his paper, Scott Semans does not tackle this problem. The only possible answer is that in order to imitate Morani's tael, recognisable from these scratches, the fakers also engraved the same details on their die.

1. This paper is an abstract of an article published in *Cahiers Numismatiques* no 122, December 1994. This article is based, first, on the testimonies of people who had been involved in the striking and in the circulation of these taels: officials of the former French colonial administration, officers of the French army in post in Tonkin or North Laos before 1945, officials of DR and BAO and leaders of the Meo tribes, and also on official reports of DR administration and on military sources.

2. François Thierry: 'L'origine des pièces au caractère fu.' *BSFN*, janvier 1986, pp.6-7.