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Members news

Mr. ... (652) of Varanasi has a series of eight double-obverse Indian rupees from William IV to George VI which appear to be full weight brockages. Will anyone interested please contact him. Mr. ... (196) of Tiruchirapalli would welcome a visit from any member who happens to be in the area. He is knowledgeable on South Indian coins from ancient to modern periods and will be pleased to show his collection to visitors. Mr. ... of Sikkim has sent a rubbing of a 1945 British India rupee. It bears a normal design, but has a Reeded Edge, instead of the normal Security Edge. He would welcome comments.

Please note that back copies of ONS newsletters (from no. 42, 1976) are available at £0 - 20 each from Regional Secretaries.

A Gold Fanam of the 'Adil Shahi Dynasty of Bijapur

by S. Goron

The 'Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur, one of the five successor dynasties to the Bahmanid kingdom, lasted approximately 200 years; from AD 1489 until 1686 (AH 895 - 1097). The last king, Sikandar, was deposed by Aurungzeb in 1686 (AH 1097), when Bijapur became part of the Moghul Empire. Aurungzeb's rupees of Bijapur are well-known. A curious feature of the series, however, is that a number of coins are known bearing the earlier date of 1091, together with regnal years 23, 24 or 26 - other regnal years may exist. Several articles have been written to explain this state of affairs and readers are referred to those by G. P. Taylor and S. H. Hodivala in JASB Numismatic supplements XV and XXVII. As far as the 'Adil Shahi dynasty is concerned, coins are known of the last five rulers. In 1910¹ G. P. Taylor published ten types of copper coins, each of various weights. The only silver coinage of the dynasty known to the author are the much published larins² struck at the port of Daboli. Three gold coins of Mohammed 'Adil Shah (AH 1037 - 1067) were published by G. P. Taylor in NS XVIII and subsequently discussed by Mohammed Isma'il in NS XXXIX. These coins, weighing 52 grains (3.4 grams) bore a Persian couplet capable of two interpretations. No other coins of this dynasty appear to have been published.

The subject of this article is a gold fanam of Sikandar 'Adil Shah, dated AH 1087. Sikandar reigned between AH 1083 and 1097 (AD 1672 - 86). Copper coins of his are known bearing the dates 1086 and 1087.

Description:

Obverse:

سلطان
۱۰۸۷

Reverse:

سلطان

Metal: Gold

Weight: 0.38 gram

Diam.: 5 mm.



1 Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Numismatic Supplement XV

2 See, for example, ONS Occasional Paper no. 15, November 1980

NB There are reasons for believing that the 'Adil Shahis of Bijapur, like their neighbours the Qutb Shahis of Golconda, paid intermittent tribute to the Moghul Emperors and also struck silver rupees in the name of the Emperor from the time of their respective treaties concluded with Shah Jahan in 1636. The Bijapur rupees of AH 1091, like a parallel series of Golconda rupees, appear to belong to this category (cfr. Mitchiner, Oriental Coins vol. III, pp. 175 - 180).

Some Numismatic Fantasies from Indonesia ?

Mr. Cribb's views expressed under this title in the June newsletter (no. 72) have not met with un-qualified agreement from members. Extracts from two letters, which add a little to the state of our information, are appended: —

Mr. P. R. Bauquis of Jakarta writes:

In June 1981 I was looking at some Chinese coins in a shop of Balikpapan (East Kalimantan — or if you prefer East Borneo), when I found there some "Iron currency" of irregular spherical shape just as those described in pages 474 and 475 of your book (ie. Mitchiner, Islamic Coins and their values: the 'iron balls' of Mr. Cribb's article). Among those spheroidal "iron currency" were also the flat "coins"; also made of iron which are visibly made by the same technique of acid engraving as the spheroidal ones. Moreover some designs are common to both the spheroids and the discoidal ones, especially a kind of Chinese looking dragon can be found on both. The shopkeeper said the whole lot (discoidal and spheroidal ones) came from Kalimantan Selatan, from a place called "Muntai" near Banjarmasin.

(Mr. Bauquis enclosed some photographs with his letter: these confirm what he says in his letter)

Mr. Tim J. Browder of San Marino, California writes:

In the June 1981 issue of ONS, I noted with interest "Some Numismatic Fantasies from Indonesia". It is interesting that I made a trip to Gresik (30 miles NW of Surabaya) the first week in June of this year to visit the East Java Company, Petrokimia Gresik. I stayed in Surabaya for two days, and in the evenings made the rounds of many small shops selling antiques, coins, swords, metals etc. I purchased a large number of Batavian Republic copper coins for about 10 c (US) each. The last night it was there I purchased a beautiful 20 inch Kris. While I was having the kris wrapped in newspapers by the dealer, I started snooping in dark corners; bottles, jars, drawers etc., and found some bullet shaped coins (?) with Malay inscriptions on them. These were in an earthen ware jar covered with dust and spider webs. I thought I had discovered a non-reported series of coins. I purchased 8 pieces for about a total of 6 dollars. The dealer knew nothing about these coins and tried to convince me they were silver. I showed him they were not silver, so the lower price was obtained. They are similar to the 'Iron balls', page 3, ONS June 1981. No two coins are alike, and some have odd designs. My coins average about one ounce each and are all 18 - 20 mm. in diameter.



Who knows ?

Dr. Hans Wilski of Handelstr. 18, 6232 Bad Soden, West Germany writes:

A few years ago I acquired the two tokens shown here. Since they bear the denomination "piastra" or "piastre" I assume that they have been used within the Ottoman Empire. In fact they have some similarity to the tokens shown by A. Weyl in Jules Fonrobert'sche Sammlung, Berlin 1878, for Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt. The metal seems to be brass. Has anybody information regarding these tokens?



Some recent publications

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- Mukherjee, B. N.*, A note on an inscription of the year seventy-four of the Azes Era, Asiatic Society (Calcutta) Monthly Bulletin, vol. X no. 6, June 1981, 8 - 9.
- Mukherjee, D.*, Copper Bent-bar Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, JNSI. 1979, 1 - 7
- Pathak, H.*, Two Double-obverse silver punchmarked coins, JNSI. 1979, 8 - 11
- Patnaik, S.*, A note on the Salepur hoard of silver punchmarked coins, JNSI. 1979, 124 - 126.
- Sahai, Y.*, The mints of Sawai Jaipur, JNSI. 1979, 55 - 65.
- Sankaranarayana, N.*, Some observations on punchmarked coins from Vellanur, JNSI. 1979, 15 - 17
- Shamma, Samir*, Islamic coins struck in Palestine (from the Arab conquest to the end of the Ottoman Empire), pp. 188, 1980. Available from Mr. Shamma at PO. Box 468, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
- Subramanian, A.*, Vijayanagar coins in the Madras Government Museum: a re-appraisal, JNSI. 1979, 66 - 74.
- Walker, J. H.*, The coinage of the successors to Sultan Faisal bin Turkee, SNC., Sept., 1981, 279 - 280.
- Munzenhandlung Holger Dombrowski GMBH of Albersloher Weg 473, 4400 Munster, West Germany have recently issued an extensive list of numismatic literature available from them.

French Colonial Double Rupees struck at Pondicherry

by M. B. Mitchiner

After extensive tracts of land in the Deccan and Penninsular India had been brought within the confines of the Moghul Empire by the campaigns of Aurungzeb (AH 1068 - 1118: AD 1658 - 1707) a number of South Indian mints commenced striking silver rupees and other denominations in the Moghul style. In some regions, such as the Carnatic (Arcot district), new Moghul style coinage and traditional Hindu style coinage continued to be struck alongside one another until the 19th. century. Although the Moghul style coinage of these southern mints was issued in a number of different denominations, – and in gold, silver and copper – the silver rupee was by far the most extensively issued denomination.

During the course of the 18th. century most of these southern territories were effectively lost to the Moghuls, though the Emperor continued to be acknowledged as titular overlord and his inscriptions continued to appear on local coinage. Real power now lay in the hands of such local Indian rulers as the Nizam of the Deccan (Hyderabad), the Nawab of the Carnatic (Arcot) and the Raja of Mysore; or in the hands of such Western trading companies as those established by the British and the French.

Silver coins of Moghul type larger than the standard One Rupee denomination were rarely struck by any of these various South Indian powers. The British struck silver Double Rupees at Mazulipatam in 1780 and at Arcot in 1807. Tipu Sultan of Mysore struck Double Rupees at Seringapatam, and occasionally at other mints, for about a decade at the end of the 18th. century.

The French struck many silver rupees from 1736 onwards, bearing the Arcot mint name and distinguished by the presence of a crescent symbol to the left of the regnal year. They bear the standard inscription of the reigning Moghul Emperor. Silver Double Rupees of French origin are virtually unknown, hence the interest of the two specimens published here. One of these two coins was recently illustrated by V. Gadoury and G. Cousinie (page 166, no. 17) in *Monnaies Coloniales Francaises: 1670 - 1980* (Monte Carlo 1980). The denomination does not appear to have been published elsewhere.

1 AR Double Rupee weighing 22.79 grammes

Standard inscriptions of Shah 'Alam II: Arcot mint name: crescent symbol to left of regnal year: dated AH 1181, regnal year 6 (RY 6 = 1764/5 and appears to be fictitious, as on many British rupees). AH 1181 ran from 30/5/1767 until 17/5/1768 and appears to have been the true date of issue. This coin has a Plain Edge

2 AR Double Rupee weighing 22.51 grammes

Similar, and bearing the same date. Struck from different obverse and reverse dies and with an Upright Milled Edge

These two double rupees, which belong to Messrs. Spink and son, were probably struck as Presentation pieces, so it may be appropriate to mention some other presentation pieces struck at Pondicherry about the same time. Gadoury and Cousinie note broad flan presentation One Rupee pieces of Pondicherry dated AH 1184/RY 10; AH 1185/RY 11 and AH 1199/RY 24. In all these cases the Hijra year refers to a slightly later date than the regnal year; so one seems to be dealing with a series of presentation pieces bearing dates that are erroneous in a consistent manner.

