



Felicitas. Essays in Numismatics, Epigraphy & History in honour of Joe Cribb

Editors: Shailendra Bhandare, Sanjay Garg

Published by Reesha Books International, Mumbai (www.reeshabooks.com), overseas distribution by Todywalla Auctions, Todywalla House, 80 Ardeshir Dady Street, Khetwadi, Mumbai 400 004 (info@todyauction.com).

ISBN 81-89752-08, A4 size, case bound, pp. 500, Price Rs 2,200, US\$ 70, £ 40.

This volume has been published as a tribute to Joe Cribb and to the influence for good he has had during many years working in the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum. Many of the contributors, who have written the papers in this book, have begun by paying tribute to Joe for the lessons he has taught them. Their comments relate to the period after Joe began working at the British Museum. The development of Joe's interest in coins during his schooldays has been largely omitted, so it is reasonable to rectify this.

Joe Cribb, the schoolboy who became interested in coins.

On page 31 there is a photograph of Steve, sitting in his wheelchair, with the caption “*Steve Cribb: Joe’s brother who introduced Joe to the wonderful world of coins*”. The caption is true and the reviewer uses a reviewer’s licence to add some background to this succinct comment.

I first met the Cribb family at a time when Steve was a young teenager, Joe was in about his last year at primary school and I was a medical student. Steve was a keen coin collector and I made many visits to their home. Steve was not able to access his coins, so one of his brothers brought the trays from his coin cabinet. This was usually Joe. At one time, Steve was interested in Nuremberg jetons. I don’t remember them attracting Joe. It was when Steve developed an interest in Chinese cash and ancient Chinese coins with unusual shapes, that Joe’s interest was aroused. Steve discovered Wallis and Wallis auctions of Lewes. I was despatched to bid for a pair of uninscribed ancient Chinese hollow handle spades. Because Steve had introduced the auction house, he had first choice and I acquired the spade with a chipped foot (later published). Steve obtained many of his Chinese coins by post and I remember several sessions during which Steve, Joe and I discussed which pieces were genuine and which were forgeries; and also the techniques used by forgers and how to identify their products more easily. In his survey of Joe’s museum career, Andrew Burnett has written (page 25): “*He cleverly picked a topic, China, in which the department had no expertise, and first learned Chinese, and then rapidly became the only person in the Western World who at that time had any real expertise in Chinese numismatics and he alone had any idea about what was genuine and what was fake*”. It had all begun much earlier, sitting around the front room table in the Cribb’s home.

Wallis and Wallis also yielded a Kushano-Sasanian quarter dinar of Hormazd Kushanshah. Who were these people making such attractive gold coins portraying the standing king enclosed by a legend in cursive Greek script that was difficult to read? What was happening in Central Asia? Who were the Kushans? We debated.

Several years later, Joe began his work in the British Museum. Shortly after this, he showed me, with great enthusiasm, some packets of copper coins still wrapped in newspapers. They looked as if they had not been disturbed since arriving at the British Museum in the late nineteenth century. Their inscriptions, partly in Kharosthi and partly in Chinese, combined Joe’s interests in the Kushans and the Chinese. The rest is history. Joe’s paper, written over a decade later, on “*The Sino-Kharosthi coins of Khotan*” (1984-85) is the best study of this subject.

Felicitas

The book is introduced by a brief editorial written by Shailendra Bhandare and Sanjay Garg. This is followed by the curriculum vitae of “*Joseph Edmund Cribb*”. The many achievements, publications, and distinctions

during his career of forty years at the British Museum are listed. Andrew Burnett has added a survey of his career. The introductory section ends with a selection of photos illustrating Joe, his family and his colleagues.

The body of the book comprises a series of twenty-one papers covering a wide range of topics.

1. Michael Alram, *Coinage, prestige and identity: from Rome to Persepolis and China*.
2. Shailendra Bhandare. *Linking the past: overstruck coins and the chronology of the Satavahanas*
3. Robert Bracey. *Kankali Tila and Kushan chronology*
4. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis. *Fascination with the past: ancient Persia on the coins and banknotes of Iran*
5. John S. Deyell. *Reinterpretation of a Samatata coin: the first numismatic depiction of Bodhisattva Manjushri*
6. Elizabeth Errington. *A hoard of punch-marked coins from Mathura (?)*
7. Harry Falk. *Ten thoughts on the Mathura lion capital reliquary*
8. Christine Fröhlich. *Looking for Tyche: on the tracks of a syncretism from Greece to Gandhara*
9. Sanjay Garg. *The Raj and the Rajas: a tale of numismatic diplomacy*
10. Najaf Haider. *Minting technology in Mughal India*
11. Terry Hardaker. *Aspects of human society from the earliest punch-marked coinages of the Indian subcontinent*
12. Syed Ejaz Hussain. *Coins and commerce in Bihar in seventeenth century: some reflections*
13. Barbara Mears. *A review of the pagoda coins of South East India during the Nayaka and early colonial period*
14. Wilfred Pieper. *Haraśrī: a new king of ancient Almora*
15. Himansha Prabha Ray. *Coins as history: Kuninda and Kota coins of the Punjab*
16. Nicholas Rhodes & Vasilij Mihailovs. *The coinage of Samudra Pasai*
17. Sutapa Sinha. *History of the coin collection of the Bengal Sultans in the British Museum*
18. Paul Stevens. *John Prinsep's copper coinage*
19. Pankaj Tandon. *The crowns on Kanishka's bronze coins and some additional Siva images on Kushan coins*
20. François Thierry. *Onomastic, title and chronology of the Türgesh Kaghans*
21. Helen Wang. *Famous and not-so-famous people associated with the Royal Asiatic Society*.

The book ends with a list of contributors, followed by a selection of colour plates.

The list of contributors, and the wide range of subjects they have chosen to write about, reflect the broad scope of Joe's own interests and the extensive range of his activities during his career at the British Museum. Scholars from a range of different backgrounds in numismatics and history will find evidence relating to their fields of interest in this volume. The papers are generally well researched and of a high standard. The printed presentation is good, and so are the illustrations.

It is not practical to discuss each paper individually, so the comments that follow are selective. These comments are subjective insofar as they relate to points that strike the reviewer, rather than being based on inherent merits.

Barbara Mears has undertaken the difficult task of trying to correlate the observed types of 'three swami' and 'one swami' pagodas of south east India with the descriptions, names and mint attributions provided by earlier travellers to the region. This is a complex piece of research and the end result is a much clearer understanding of this fairly common coin series.

The study by Pankaj Tandon into the forms of crown used on Kanishka's copper coins provides a further tool in the task of analysing Kushan copper coinage. There is still much work to do in analysing mint attributions and the sequence of issues. He adds to Joe's earlier paper (1997) some new Siva images on Kushan coins, but he avoids the vexed question of identifying this deity. The coin inscriptions state very clearly that he is the Kushan god Wesho. Indian iconography later adopted this image to represent the Hindu god Siva. What is the relationship between Wesho and Siva? It is a question that certainly merits more thought and I am sure Joe would agree.

Christine Fröhlich has looked at the Greek goddess Tyche and her affinities with the more easterly goddess Ardoxsho and the Indian goddess Hariti. A separate study by Madhurika Maheshwari ('*From ogress to goddess, Hariti, a Buddhist deity*', Mumbai 2009) considers the situation from the Indian perspective. She draws clear links between Hariti and Ardoxsho. These two studies, one starting from the Greek end of the spectrum and the other starting from the Indian end of the spectrum, are complimentary and best read together.

François Thierry has tackled the literary evidence relating to the Türgesh kaghans of Central Asia, a people whose cash-style coins are now becoming better known. His analysis corrects earlier errors and provides a historical background, which can be used by numismatists who study their coinage.

Overstruck coins provide a valuable source of evidence for establishing the relative dating of coin issues. Shailendra Bhandare has looked at this kind of evidence in the context of Satavahana coinage. The traditional view that coins with the issuer's name 'Satavahana' were all struck by the founder of the dynasty is no longer tenable. It is now clear that some of these coins were struck later, probably using 'Satavahana' as a dynastic name. This is just one of his conclusions.

Nicholas Rhodes and Vasilij Mihailovs have discussed the historical evidence relating to the rulers of Samudra Pasai, including that provided numerous tombstones. They present a revised chronology for the rulers of this Sumatran kingdom, along with a catalogue of the coins.

The comments made in the preceding paragraphs give an idea of the scope. Many scholars will find the papers interesting and useful. I am pleased to recommend this book and would also like to congratulate the editors for assembling such an interesting group of papers.

Michael Mitchiner