

Coordinating Committee for Numismatics in Britain

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Contributions and information will be gratefully received. Items for the January issue should arrive by 1 November 2001, and should be sent to Elizabeth Errington or Louisa Selby, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel. 020 7323 8139/8269, fax. 020 7323 8171, e-mail coins@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

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FOCUS ON HOARDS

Recent years have seen the recovery of an ever-increasing number of remarkable coin hoards (many courtesy of that modern invention, the metal detector), while the new Treasure Act of 1996 has no doubt helped to preserve more of these finds in local museums than in the past. It therefore seems an appropriate moment for a brief survey of some of the discoveries and, as a footnote, to consider how the concept of hoarding has been interpreted by the Canadian artist Micah Lexier.

A SURVEY OF ROMAN COIN HOARDS

The earliest reference to hoarding in Britain is from the Anglo-Saxon chronicle for the year 418: 'the Romans collected all the treasures which were in Britain and hid some of them in the earth so that no-one afterwards could find them'. By implication, the Saxons must have found some of these 'treasures' (which would have surely included coins) in order to know about this activity. Presumably some of them were made into jewellery, such as the *denarius* coin pendant recently discovered with fifth-century coins (also made into pendants) from Oxborough (Norfolk). Otherwise, old Roman coins might be 're-hoarded' as marked weights, such as the set found with a hand-held balance from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Dover. A discovery of first-century bronzes at Rome during the Gothic occupation (late fifth/early sixth centuries) was re-employed as currency. It must have been a very large hoard since their position within the Gothic coin system was formalised by scratched marks of value. They also seem to have inspired the creation of large bronzes of first-century style complete with the SC senatorial mint mark. Roman hoards could still find gainful re-employment as late as the nineteenth century, when a hoard of late Roman coins, found in 1851 in a grave near Cadbury hill fort, circulated as farthings.

The rediscovery of abandoned hoards over these centuries usually occurred during ploughing or other work that involved digging. For example, sand-quarrying at Eye, Suffolk, in 1781, uncovered a lead case containing 600 gold *solidi* - the richest Roman coin find recorded in Britain. The hoard was soon dispersed (no doubt profitably since at the time each coin was worth 12 shillings). The giant hoard at Blackmoor consisted of



Victorian sketch of the two jars containing the Blackmoor hoard (both c. 45cm diam.)

c.30,000 silvered bronze *radiates* of the third century (especially a large number of coins of the British usurpers Carausius and Allectus). It was unearthed during trenching work on Earl of Selbourne's Hampshire estate in 1873. The coins, still in their containers (two giant coarseware storage jars), remained at the estate as curiosities for many years, the Earl's guests being allowed to pick handfuls to take away as souvenirs.

Over the last two centuries, discoveries have also been made by archaeological excavation. One of the most spectacular, a bronze jug containing 160 gold *aurei*, was found at Corbridge in 1911. The archaeologists reported that 'on the jug being lifted by the finder, the weight of its contents, amounting to about four pounds, proved too great for the decayed bronze, the bottom fell out, and a stream of gold coins poured out'. The *aurei* are preserved at the British Museum, although the careless manner of the excavation and the subsequent discarding of the jug and two bronze coins used as a stopper showed that, even for professional finders, there was still room for improvement in the treatment of hoards. The most prodigious Roman coin hoard from Britain was found at Mildenhall in Wiltshire in 1978, just outside the walls of the site of the Roman small town of Cunetio: 54,951 coins in a lead box and a large storage jar over half a metre wide were found by the new treasure-hunting weapon of the age, the metal detector. Although most of the coins were base silver and silvered bronze *denarii* and *radiates*, the find was declared Treasure Trove and acquired by the British Museum. However, the old Treasure Trove

law was notoriously fickle and could result in seemingly capricious judgements: the second biggest British coin find, 47,912 silvered bronze *radiates* from Normanby, Lincolnshire (metal detected in 1985) were found not to be treasure on the grounds of their negligible bullion content.

About 2,000 Roman coin hoards have been recorded over the centuries to date, but the last decade alone has seen the discovery of a number of significant hoards in Britain. The largest find of first-century Roman gold, from Shillington, Bedfordshire, comprised 127 *aurei* to AD 79 and is now in Luton Museum. It was found in 1998 amongst other metal detected finds suggestive of a ritual coin-deposition site that perhaps stretched back into the pre-Roman iron age. The British Museum has acquired the Didcot hoard of 126 *aurei* to AD 160 (metal detected in an Oxfordshire field in 1995), while excavations in the City of London at Plantation Place during the summer of 2000 uncovered a hoard of 43 *aurei* (see below).

The 1990s saw much more than discoveries of early Roman gold. The finest combined late Roman coin and plate bullion treasure was found by chance during a search with a metal detector for a lost hammer in a Suffolk field in 1992. Its immediate reporting allowed archaeologists to excavate the find in detail. This is the fabulous Hoxne treasure, now displayed in the British Museum's Roman Britain gallery. It consists of 14,780 coins (some bronze, but mainly gold and silver) and c.200 gold and silver objects (jewellery, fine tableware and toilet instruments). These included over 100 silver spoons, ladles, toothpicks and cosmetic tools. Micro-excavation revealed that the objects had been secreted in a wooden chest, which survived only as a colour change in the soil with some rusted iron fittings. Bone or ivory fragments and silver fittings, including two miniature padlocks, proved that some loose items, perhaps the coins or jewellery, had been contained within the treasure chest in smaller boxes and incredibly, even some fragments of textile and straw packing survived. The coins included 565 gold *solidi*, 14,126 silver *siliquae*, 60 double-*siliquae miliarenses* and five half *siliquae*. The find is so large that the impending catalogue will form a valuable typological reference for late Roman *siliquae*.

The 1997 discovery at Patching in West Sussex, another metal detector find, consists of 23 gold *solidi*, 3 silver *miliarenses* and 23 silver *siliquae* along with two gold rings and a (Roman) pound of silver bullion, all now in Worthing Museum. Patching was completely unprecedented because 21 coins post-dated the reign of Constantine III (AD 407-11) whose coins have always been the latest to be found in any Roman hoard in Britain (e.g. Hoxne contained two coins of this usurper). In fact the latest coin was a *solidus* in the name of Libius Severus (AD 461-5) and was therefore deposited in the uneasy world of a Britain on the eve of Saxon domination.

1998 saw the recovery of 9,213 silver *denarii* from Shapwick, Somerset. Deposited in the AD 220s, it contains a very representative run of the silver coinage stretching back to the reign of Nero, and even 260 very worn coins struck around 31 BC in the name of Marc Antony. It is by far the largest discovery of *denarii* in Britain. Only one in twelve recorded hoards contain more than 1,000 coins and almost all of these are the highly debased silvered bronzes of the later third and fourth centuries. In numerical terms alone the *denarii* of Shapwick (like the *siliquae* of Hoxne) are therefore a very unusual find. Shapwick has a further claim to fame:

the investigation of its findspot revealed the remains of a Roman villa. Hoards by their very nature are secretive deposits and are almost always found without contexts or are usually buried at a discreet distance from settlement sites like Cunetio. The Shapwick Villa treasure was concealed in the corner of a back room, perhaps evidence of the villa's office with, astonishingly, an intact treasury. The find has now been acquired by Somerset County Museum at Taunton where the display presents an interpretation of the site and the Somerset area in Roman times.

Both Patching and the Shapwick Villa hoards have been acquired under the new Treasure Act (1996) and the new law has proven very useful in arranging an easier and more amicable way for local and national museums to preserve interesting finds. The task of recording hoards is ongoing and there are plans in the pipeline for two new volumes of the *Coin Hoards from Roman Britain* series. A compilation of all the Roman hoards recorded from Britain prior to the 1990s by the late Anne Robertson has also recently been published by the RNS.

Richard Abdy

A HOARD OF ROMAN AUREI FROM LONDON



The hoard of Roman gold aurei from Fenchurch Street, London

Archaeologists from the Museum of London Archaeology Service uncovered a hoard of 43 gold *aurei* during excavations at Plantation Place, Fenchurch Street in June 2000. The coins were found lying closely together and had probably been contained in a leather or textile bag. Traces in the soil suggested that they had also been placed inside a small wooden box. The hoard was discovered in the corner of a stone-lined area (possibly the equivalent of a safety-deposit box) beneath one of the floors of an impressive stone residential building that had been constructed after AD 130. The building itself lay a short distance from the south-east corner of the Roman forum and basilica, in the Leadenhall and Gracechurch Street area of the City of London.

The hoard consisted solely of gold coins and was probably not intended for everyday circulation, but may have been for use as bullion by administrators, bankers or rich merchants. The earliest coins were issued under Nero in AD 65-6 and the final emperor represented is Marcus Aurelius, with the latest coin issued in AD 174. All emperors of the period are represented in the hoard, with the exception of Nerva and Domitian. Nearly half of the coins feature Hadrian (8 coins) and Antoninus Pius (12 coins). In total, the hoard spans a period of 109 years and must have been deliberately deposited in about AD

175-80. There was no indication of any disaster or emergency within the building that may have caused the money to be hidden and it had presumably been left there with the intention of recovery.

Most of the coins are in a very good state of preservation, although the two coins of Nero, in particular, show some signs of wear. The weights of the coins are variable, the lightest being a specimen of Vespasian (5.92 gms), the heaviest, an example of Antoninus Pius (7.42 gms). There are some less common types. A single coin of Vitellius of AD 69 (*Roman Imperial Coinage* I, 100) has a reverse depicting busts of his children. Rare coins of Lucius Aelius, the adoptive heir of Hadrian who died before his succession (*RIC* II, 442), and of Lucilla (*RIC* III, M Aurelius 774), wife of Lucius Verus, both depict reverses of Pietas. Two coins of Hadrian commemorate his visits around the Empire, one with a reverse depicting Hispania (*RIC* II, 305) and the other, his arrival back in Italy (*RIC* II, 320).

Only a few hoards containing gold coins for this period have been found anywhere in Britain. In 1911, a large hoard of 160 *aurei* was found at Corbridge, near Hadrian's Wall, and 126 *aurei* were found from Didcot in Oxfordshire in 1995. These hoards, now in the British Museum, both terminate with coins of Antoninus Pius. This is the first gold coin hoard to be found from Roman London and the coins now feature as a permanent display in the Roman London Gallery at the Museum of London.

Jenny Hall

A HOARD OF OFFA'S COINS FROM AISKEW, NORTH YORKSHIRE.

A convincing chronology for Offa's light coinage struck prior to 792/3 has proved a persistently difficult problem, not least because of the complete absence of recorded native hoards deposited during his reign. Disregarding conjectural seventeenth- and eighteenth-century hoards, which have been proposed to explain the relative proliferation of Offa's coins in several of the important eighteenth-century English collections and which, in any case, could not now be convincingly reconstructed, the only serious sources for study are the 1906 Ilanz, Switzerland, hoard and the enigmatic c. 1830 Rome hoard. The Swiss hoard contained two coins of Offa and one of Ecgberht II of Kent. The handful of Offa's coins probably associated with the Rome hoard are consummately dealt with by C. E. Blunt, 'Anglo-Saxon coins found in Italy' in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History*, 1986.

It is, therefore, particularly satisfying to be able to record what is almost certainly a developing hoard of coins of this period from a site in Aiskew, near Bedale in north Yorkshire. Mr Barry Court, with the aid of a metal detector, has, since 1991, recovered more than a dozen coins from a single field. In this age of the metal detector, multiple finds of Offa are now not exceptional and several sites can be added to the historic assemblages from Hamwic and Richborough. However, without exception, these recent accumulations can be explained as accidental losses, principally of single coins on productive sites which were, almost certainly, directly involved in commerce and often contribute to a chronological sequence with earlier and later coin losses represented. Other evidence of regular activity, such as items of jewellery and miscellaneous artefacts, is also often

present on these recent sites. Although the accumulation at Aiskew has been gradual, it is significant that the site is devoid of other material or artefacts which might mark it as a productive site. The substantial numbers of Offa's coins now recorded as single finds indicate that this coinage did not circulate north of the Humber, nor would this be expected, in view of the incompatibility of local issues and the Southumbrian silver pennies. An explanation for the presence of these coins so far north might be ecclesiastical and is reinforced by the presence (so far) of coins of Archbishop Jaenberht and the Bishop of London, Eadberht. They may represent movements of Southumbrian coins to and between religious foundations, for uses other than those of conventional trade.

I have suggested a chronology which would see the establishment and rapid expansion of a prestigious and substantive light coinage for Offa: a coinage struck principally by a group of London moneyers, augmented by certain issues of the Canterbury moneyer Eoba and replacing an earlier, and probably spasmodic, small flan aniconic issue. The earliest stages of this substantive light coinage would have included the coins of Offa which abbreviate his name and ethnic title to OFRM and their immediate successors and, in particular, the very finest of the portrait coins. The coins so far found at Aiskew, with regard to types and moneyers, conform to that suggested early light phase. The inclusion of two coins, those of Archbishop Jaenberht and Ecgberht II of Kent, are of particular significance. Jaenberht's coin is of an unrecorded type, struck without reference to any royal overlord and with the title, pontifex. Stylistically this coin appears to be contemporary with the independent issue of Ecgberht II. The presence of both these coins in this hoard seems to suggest an early status for the group so far. Significantly, there are, as yet, no small flan early coins or light coinage types outside this suggested early substantive light phase; types which have been considered as later in date.

The coins so far found can be summarised as follows with reference to types conforming to C. E. Blunt's classification: *October 1991*. Bishop Eadberht of London under Offa. B 34. 1.25g. Disposition, Dales Museum, Hawes. *September 1992*. Offa, moneyer, Ealmund. B- (New portrait type). 1.29g. Christies, 28/4/1993, Lot 590. *October 1992*. Offa, moneyer, Ethelwald. B 57. 1.30g. Christies, 28/4/1993, Lot 588. *Autumn 1992*. Offa, moneyer, Ibba. B 62. 1.26g. Christies, 28/4/1993, Lot 589. *August 1993*. Offa, moneyer, Ethelwald. B 55. 1.19g. Offa, moneyer, Alhmund. B 40. 1.23g. Archbishop Jaenberht. B -. 1.23g. Yorkshire Museum. *September 1994*. Offa, moneyer, Eoba. B 17. 1.17g. Yorkshire Museum. *1995*. Offa, moneyer, Alhmund. B 40. 1.16g. Offa, moneyer, Ethelwald. B 56. 1.20g. British Museum. *September 1995*. Offa, moneyer, Eoba. B 16. 1.26g. British Museum. *April 1997*. Ecgberht II of Kent, moneyer, Udd. B 4. 1.26g. Offa, moneyer, Eadhun. B 39. 16.0g. Spink coin sale No. 129, 17/11/1998. Lot 134. *Autumn 2000?* Offa, moneyer, Ibba. B 65. 1.20g? Private sale. This coin was found by Mr Court but was reported to the Fitzwilliam Museum. Inquiries have established that there is little doubt that it comes from Aiskew.

I would like to thank Marion Archibald, Craig Barclay, Barry Court and Sean Miller for information regarding some of these coins.

Derek Chick

HOARDING MEMORIES: TIME IS MONEY



Sculpture: *A minute of my time*, by Micah Lexier

A conceptual sculpture of struck nickel-plated 'coins' in a metal case by Micah Lexier (born Winnipeg, Canada, 1960) has been recently purchased by the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, with the aid of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the National Art Collections Fund, the Goldsmiths' Company and the Friends of the British Museum. His original drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings.

Lexier's sculpture explores the concepts of time, money and memory. His struck coins/medals have on one side the image of an abstract doodle which occupied the artist for exactly one minute. Drawn originally on paper, the transient, casual drawing is permanently preserved by being engraved on a 'coin'. On the reverse is the inscription MICAH LEXIER A MINUTE OF MY TIME JULY 20 1997 23.53-23.54. This minute is repeated by being struck over and over again. Time, drawing and autobiography all become currencies in their own right, and viewers are encouraged to ask questions about the arbitrariness of survival, and of the original 'importance' or intention of the objects we study and display.

Lexier's coins are intentionally archaeological. The work refers to the times when coins were hoarded, material now treated as archaeological evidence, commemorative of the moments of burial or loss. They are stored in a metal box, a deliberate visual reference to the caskets in which coin hoards are often found. This work complements and comments upon the ancient objects which are at the heart of our collections, which, unlike Lexier's piece, are not works of art, but which are sometimes treated with the reverence due to 'art'.

Lexier works in a range of media, using combinations of words and images, mostly deliberately familiar and unemphatic, to make acute observations on the relationship between people, particularly families, and on how our perceptions of art (and the process of making it), people and events change through time. His reputation is growing fast in North America where he has pieces in major public collections in New York, Montreal and Ottawa. This is his first work in a British museum.

The piece is currently on exhibition in the central case of the HSBC Money Gallery, in conjunction with a hoard of 126 Roman gold *aurei* and fragments of a pottery container from Didcot, Oxfordshire. This hoard, worth the equivalent of 10 years of a legionary soldier's pay, was buried in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-80). The hoard may have belonged to a high-ranking civil

servant or soldier. It contains images not only of the reigning emperor but also those of his predecessors from Nero (AD 54-68) onwards. The coins thus preserve the collective memory of these rulers, as well as that of the hoard's owner - even though he remains nameless. Like the conceptual sculpture at the other end of the case, the hoard marks a particular moment in time. However, the reasons for its burial and subsequent loss remain a matter of speculation.

Luke Syson

EXHIBITIONS

The Victorians

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 22 January - 15 April

The centenary of Queen Victoria's death has given rise to a number of exhibitions, and the Ashmolean did not miss the opportunity to mount a fascinating display celebrating the reign of Britain's longest-serving monarch. Drawing on the Ashmolean's rich collection of coins and commemorative medals from that period, as well as significant loans from outside the Museum, the exhibition addressed the major themes of the Age. The six cases and colourful wall displays introduced us to personalities, (such as Charles Darwin and, of course, Queen Victoria herself), industry, educational and social reforms, grand architectural projects and war and empire.

A great strength of the exhibition lay in the variety of exhibits: not only coins and medals, but also tapestries, model trams, stamps and reproductions of seminal paintings. Particular highlights among the medals were those celebrating the construction of new municipal buildings, such as Leeds Town Hall, opened by Queen Victoria on 7th September 1858.

Another welcome addition was the injection of humour, particularly in the case celebrating hard work and sobriety. In order to put across a message of clean living, the Victorians struck medals displaying commandments of how we should behave. One example pictured two families, one hard-working and well provided for, the other wretched and ragged with a barrel of whisky in their midst. Another displayed the unambiguous legend: 'I willingly agree to abstain from all intoxicating drinks and will not give or offer them to others'!

The Victorians have always been a fascinating subject for study and enthusiasts found much to interest them in the exhibition. As part of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 2, it could also be booked for school groups and there was a worksheet for schools and families.

Emmajane Lawrence

Between East and West: Influence and Change in Coinage

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, 2 April - 17 June

The Octagon is used by the museum for small temporary exhibitions - some very attractive saddle rugs hang on the walls to accompany the coin exhibit. This particular exhibition seemed popular with the public: when I was there about a dozen other visitors came in, though none of them gave the displays the time and attention they deserved. The cases were well designed for showing small objects as one could get close to the pieces.

The exhibition began by introducing and contrasting the 'three ancient coinage systems' of Greece, China and India, then moved on to 'Alexander the Great's Asian

campaign and its impact on Asian coinage', illustrated by some spectacular tetradrachms and their lesser descendants. The Kushan section showed some of the deities of Greek, Iranian and Indian origin appearing on the series, as well as an impressive gold double stater of Wima Kadphises.

'The influence of Islam' was illustrated by coins from a wide geographical area, from Spain to South-East Asia and Africa. A Viking hoard of Umayyad and Abbasid dirhems (plus one Khusrav II drachm) showed the flow of silver northwards and the use of coins as bullion. The use of Western European coins in the Near East by the Crusader States and their Islamic neighbours before the start of local crusader issues was illustrated by the unimpressive, but important, Lucca and Valence pennies. The later flow of central European silver to the area allowed the production of large issues of good quality silver dirhems/trams (an Acre drachm of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was included), which in turn contributed to the creation of a new Western European denomination, the grosso.

'The Chinese Economic Sphere' dealt with the export of Chinese cast bronze cash to surrounding areas and local imitations, as well as the official coinage of Japan, Anam and Korea which had already adopted the Chinese system. The role of 'New World silver' in European and Eastern trade was illustrated by specially struck trade coins (the East India Company's 'Portcullis' coins of Elizabeth I), chop and countermarked Spanish American dollars adapted for use in the Far East and Chinese sycee, Mughal rupees and nineteenth-century dollars minted in the East from American silver. Shipwrecked 'cobs were included and were one subject (along with 'Hoarded money' and 'Holy money') of the leaflet designed for children: 'Where have you been? The secret history of coins'.

The section on European influence in India concentrated on coinage under the East India Company and later British Indian coins, then showed some of the nineteenth-century Princely States' issues. The exhibition finished with the influence of Western technology on the currency of Asia (coins and banknotes). The exhibition covered a vast range of coinage. Though it was well laid out, with some enlarged photographs, most visitors would find it difficult to take in the whole exhibit in one visit. It is perhaps a pity it was only on show for three months - even enthusiastic numismatic students can find it difficult to fit in more than one visit in this short period.

Susan Tyler-Smith

Knots & Crosses : Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Coinage

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 24 April - 9 September

This small jewel of a show is the latest in the welcome series of temporary exhibitions arranged by the Heberden Coin Room on different aspects of numismatics. On this occasion, Dr Anna Gannon was invited to create in three dimensions the main points of her recent innovative thesis on the close stylistic and iconographical connections between early Anglo-Saxon art and coinage. The period is that of the first Anglo-Saxon issues in gold and silver, conventionally known as thrymsas and sceattas, produced during the seventh and early eighth centuries which are so well represented in the Heberden collection. Associations are demonstrated by placing coins and artefacts side by side to striking effect: one will never again look at the cup held by the figure on the sceattas of Series K without seeing the little

blue-green glass vessel of precisely similar shape and scale shown with it here. Where parallels lie in sculpture or illuminated manuscripts too large or inaccessible for exhibition, they are represented by photographs. Particularly helpful, as the coins are so tiny, are the enlarged photographs which accompany each one.

The exhibits are arranged thematically by the major varieties of coin-type: crosses, birds, animals, human figures etc. The interwoven strands of classical, Celtic and Germanic sources of the designs are identified with particular emphasis on the adaptations made in the service of Christian iconography. The widespread use of the same visual idioms on other contemporary works of art establishes that they were part of a standard repertoire immediately understood by contemporaries, especially the sophisticated patrons of the coinage itself. Some of the associations made or cited here are already well known but many are refreshingly new in a numismatic context. The iconography of the coins is almost invariably interpreted as Christian but it is also emphasised that it can be multi-layered, at the same time carrying a secular message or conveying allusions to the pagan themes of an earlier Germanic tradition. In most cases the viewer is persuaded by the evidence, but may occasionally disagree with the suggested sources of the designs or their elucidation, and detect a slight tendency to over-interpret the motifs, especially in the direction of theological exegesis. These are, however, matters of opinion and the associations adduced are invariably stimulating and thought-provoking.

Looking at a few particular examples, various cross shapes and details on the coins are closely paralleled on the Anglo-Saxon jewels: the form of the splendid gold cloisonné cross-pendant from Ixworth, and the pommée cross on the gold and cabuchon garnet pendant from Milton. In relation to the bird types on the coins, their mixed classical and Christian inspiration is discussed and the recurring themes demonstrated from artefacts and manuscripts, again with many illuminating comments. The coin-type of Series J showing a large bird with a small one perched in its back which has long puzzled numismatists is a case in point. An example is shown alongside a brooch from Berinsfield with an identical design and is convincingly explained as an allusion to *Deuteronomy* 32, 11, describing how an eagle encourages its fledgling to fly by carrying it on its back, and interpreted as a prefiguration of Christ. For the animal types striking parallels are produced in classical glass, Anglo-Saxon metal work and contemporary illuminated manuscripts, and a case made for identifying some of the beasts not as 'wolves', as has generally been suggested, but as lions. The positive and negative aspects of the snake motif are investigated and a similar duality recognised in its use in Christian iconography. It is interesting to see the Two Emperors type reproduced on a solidus-sized gilt base-metal pendant, evidence of the popularity of this design in its Christian dimension beyond the coinage.

Like all good exhibitions, *Knots & Crosses* provides both aesthetic pleasure and intellectual stimulation. The coin designs are superb miniature works of art. The accompanying artefacts are of outstanding interest in their own right and often of great beauty. The connections made between them represent fresh insights, not just into the iconography of the coins, but into the minds of the Christian Anglo-Saxons who created them. The approach taken so successfully in this

exhibition will undoubtedly encourage further research into this under-explored aspect of the coinage.

Marion Archibald

Struck on Gold: Coins of the Mughal Emperors of India

Gallery 69a, British Museum, 10 May - 15 September 2001

This display has been devised to coincide with the major exhibition of Mughal jewellery from the al-Sabah collection in the Museum. Mughal coinage from 1526, the time of Babur, the dynasty's founder in India, to the end of Mughal rule in 1857, is marvellously varied, informative and attractive. This exhibition presents some of the treasures of the Museum's splendid collection and attempts to describe various aspects of this coinage to visitors. The title of the display is taken from part of one of the poetic couplets found on Mughal coins and gives the impression that the coins are all gold; in fact, less than half of the coins on show are in fact gold, the others being silver, billon and copper. It is also not clear how the visitor should actually proceed once they have examined the book of Mughal miniature paintings with the mint scene in the first case. The second display unit is devoted to presentation coins while the accompanying leaflet begins with 'origins', which seems a more logical procedure and is the one adopted here.

'Origins' describes the dynasty's Central Asian background and shows various coins from that area, as well as some that were in use in India at the time of Babur's conquest. These include bahlolis, the low-grade billon coins of the Lodi Sultans of Delhi, which are incorrectly described as copper in the display. The next section, 'Spread of Empire', explains how the Mughal empire, after a brief set-back, expanded from the reign of Akbar to that of Aurangzeb to cover most of India. Coins include rupees of Satgaon in Bengal; Karpa, Kanji and Mahmud Bandar in the south. There is also a unique gold coin of Humayun, struck possibly in Agra, and two of his coins struck jointly at Qandahar with Tahmasp I, the Safavid Shah of Iran, with whom he sought refuge during the Suri interlude.

After Aurangzeb, Mughal power waned quite quickly, leading in due course to the fragmentation of the empire. Sikhs, Marathas, Jats and others were not slow to carve out their own kingdoms, and there were also various European East India Companies. Many of these successor powers continued to acknowledge the Mughal emperor in their coin legends. Included in the display are a fine Maratha rupee of Rajapur and a decorative gold mohur struck by Lord Lake after entering Delhi in 1804.

The currency system is described in the next section. Initially it consisted of silver coins on the Central Asian standard and low-grade billon or copper coins based on the contemporary Indian standards. When Sher Shah Suri came to power in 1540, he introduced the silver rupee and a heavy copper coin and its fractions throughout his territories. This system was continued by the Mughals when Akbar regained power, with the addition of a gold coinage of mohurs (or ashrafis). Excellent examples of the currency systems are shown, including the only issue that actually quotes the name *rupaya* on it (a rupee of Akbar struck at Agra).

The next section is devoted to the religious, poetic and calligraphic aspects of the coinage. Attention is paid to Akbar's introduction of a new religion, the Din-i-Ilahi or Divine Faith, which is reflected not only on his later coins, but also on many of those of his two immediate

successors. Examples of poetic couplets in Persian (the court language) on Mughal coins are provided. These are particularly varied during the reign of Jahangir. The same applies to calligraphy, which also attained its apogee during his reign and continued to some extent into that of his son, Shah Jahan I.

The remaining sections are devoted to the eye-catching Mughal presentation, zodiac and portrait coins. Reproductions of some spectacular gigantic coins can be seen, as well as a selection of nisar or scatter coins. A set of gold coins - each representing a sign of the zodiac and with an enlarged photograph of the design - are arranged around a central depiction of a sun. Some of the silver zodiac coins are also shown. Mention could have been made of the fact that the zodiac coins were so popular that they were imitated almost as soon as they were first struck; many such imitations in gold and silver, of various quality, are known. Indeed, one of the silver coins shown is such an imitation, although this is not mentioned in the caption. The portrait coins feature a superb set of the gold medallion mohurs issued by Jahangir, depicting either Akbar or himself. On some coins, Jahangir holds a wine cup, on others he balances an orb on his fingers.

The information about the coins is necessarily limited, as is the display space for the coins themselves. The quality of the coins is extremely high and visitors should come away with, at least, a general awareness of Mughal coinage. The captions are generally clear and there is a map showing the main Mughal mint towns. All in all a very pleasing display for both specialist and casual visitor alike and one which anyone interested in the coinage, history and arts of India, should see.

Stan Goron

NEWS

UK NUMISMATIC TRUST

Since January 2000, the UK Numismatic Trust has awarded 8 grants, totalling £3000. Three of the projects involved the metallurgical analysis of coins, three supported travel expenses for research projects, and the remaining two went towards the publication of a mint study and the underwriting of a symposium.

The Trust would welcome further applications. For an application form, please write to the Secretary, Keith Sugden, at the Department of Numismatics, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL.

THE HIRAYAMA TRAINEE CURATOR SCHEME 2001

From May to July, Dr Nasim Khan from the Department of Archaeology, Peshawar University, Pakistan, worked in the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, as the latest Hirayama Trainee Curator in Silk Road Numismatics, funded by the Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, Japan. Nasim Khan has been recording the finds from illicit diggings at the cave site of Kashmir Smast in the Peshawar Valley and has amassed substantial evidence, particularly for the period of the fifth to ninth century AD. His work has brought many new coins to light which will help to establish a numismatic framework for the little-known Hun coinage in this region. It is hoped that his proposed exploratory excavation at the site will be equally productive.

A NEW CURATOR OF SOUTH ASIAN COINS

The Ashmolean Museum has appointed Dr Shailendra Bhandare as the new Assistant Keeper of South Asian coins in the Heberden Coin Room. Dr Bhandare completed his PhD (on coin evidence for the Satavahana period) at Bombay University in 1999. The same year he spent three months at the Fitzwilliam Museum on a Charles Wallace Visiting Fellowship, working on the Indian Princely States and Colonial coin collections. He was then appointed a Research Fellow of the Society for South Asian Studies (British Academy) for three years, to work on a catalogue of the coins of the Princely States in the Department of Coins and Medals, at the British Museum. He was one of the curators responsible for mounting the current exhibition on Mughal coinage, *Struck on Gold*. He will take up his new appointment in December.

BANS CONGRESS

Woolton Hall, University of Manchester, 6-8 April 2001
Our appreciation of an excellent Congress was not in the least dampened by the rather lengthy rainfall. Although the reception at Manchester Museum had to be moved to another wing as the original venue was flooded, 'Writing on Celtic coins', turned out to be very interesting indeed, as explained by Jonathan Williams. The meal that followed was much enjoyed also - no mere snack this!

On Saturday, Paul Withers ('believed unique' but not 'unpublished') gave us a penetrating reassessment of the round halfpence and farthings of Edward I and II, a fitting launch for the publication of the book he and Bente have written on this topic. Phyllis Stoddart introduced us to Edward Carter-Preston as medallist, some of whose work in this media was exhibited at Woolton Hall. This aroused our interest for the afternoon trip to Liverpool Cathedral to see his sculpture, which was shown to us by his daughter Julia Carter-Preston. We also managed to fit in a visit to the Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight. On our return, Virginia Hewitt's fascinating account of her contacts in Eastern and Central Europe with the people concerned with banknote design provided first-hand information about the thinking behind the designs, at a time when national identities are (re)emerging.

On Sunday, Keith Sugden spoke on the earliest coinages in the West and Joe Bispham on the coinage of Stephen, especially the use of 'cancelled' or defaced dies. Graham Dyer paid a fitting tribute to the work of William Gardner - the designer and engraver whose initials are on the Elizabeth II 3d and on the 20p coin - who died on 28 December 2000, aged 86. Bob Lyall was able to relate much of his personal experience of the tokens of Malta, before Joe Bispham gave the closing remarks. We owe much gratitude to Joe, Keith Sugden and Phyllis Stoddart for the success of this congress. A. J. Holmes

CHANGE OF EDITORS

Brendan Moore resigned as co-editor of the *CCNB Newsletter* at the end of March, following his promotion to a new post as Assistant to the Manager of the King's Library Project (the development of the King's Library as a new exhibition space for the British Museum). We congratulate Brendan on his new appointment and also thank him very much for taking on the extra work of the events listings and mailing list for the two last issues of the *Newsletter*, at a time when his section of the Department was severely short staffed. His replacement from this issue is Louisa Selby, who has been a Museum Assistant in the Department of Coins and Medals since

February.

BAMS NEWS

The British Art Medal Society held its 2001 annual weekend conference in Cork on 6-8 July. The weekend was centred on the city's Crawford Art Gallery and the Crawford College of Art. Speakers from Cork included Peter Murray, curator of the art gallery, who talked about its collections; Fiona Kearney, arts officer of University College Cork, who lectured on the contemporary sculpture in the college's collections; Mary McCarthy, director of the National Sculpture Factory, who spoke about that institution; and Roger Hannam, lecturer in sculpture at Crawford College of Art, who talked about his own sculptural and medallic work and that of his students. Talks on historical medals were given by Michael Kenny of the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, who spoke generally on Irish medals, and Robert Heslip of the Ulster Museum, Belfast, whose subject was 'John Vinycomb: a forgotten medal designer'. There was also a guided tour of William Burges's magnificent St Fin Barre's cathedral; the official opening of the 2001 BAMS Student Medal Project travelling exhibition at Cork's Vision Centre, and the associated prize-giving; an opportunity to view 'Resonating', an exhibition of works by Jane McAdam Freud, at University College. A practical workshop led by Ron Dutton gave participants the chance to model their own self-portrait in reverse. Collectors, curators, artists, dealers and others all enjoyed this highly successful weekend, held in a most attractive city. Next year's BAMS weekend conference will be held in Norfolk on 12-14 April 2002. For more details, contact Philip Attwood at pattwood@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

RNS NEWS

The RNS medal for 2001 has been awarded to Ulla Westermark, former Director of the Swedish Coin Cabinet.

The Society expresses warm thanks to Barrie Cook, who is standing down after six years as Meetings Secretary. He is replaced by Jonathan Williams, also of the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum.

Four awards were made for research in oriental numismatics: two from the Kreitman Fund; one from the Lowick Fund; and one from the Chand A&Z Fund. Applications are invited for the first award to be made from the Michael Broome Fund. The purpose of the fund is to encourage the study of numismatics in areas reflecting Michael Broome's own interests. These concentrated on Islamic coinage, but also embraced Maria Theresa thalers, medals and broad areas of general numismatic method and interest. The award will be for £250. Applications should arrive by 1 October 2001 and be addressed to The Secretary, Royal Numismatic Society, c/o Department of Coins and Medals, The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG.

Fellows are also informed that the joint RNS/BNS Library has new opening hours: it is now open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12 until 6, except over Christmas and New Year, when the Warburg is closed. Please note that the Library may close earlier on those days which coincide with Society meetings, normally the third Tuesday of each month, October to June. For further information on the Library, please see the Society's website, at www.rns.dircon.co.uk

TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Country Views: Place and Identity on British Paper Money
Gallery 69a, British Museum,
13 September 2001 - 17 February 2002

LECTURES, SEMINARS, COLLOQUIA AND CONFERENCES

CELTIC COINAGE 2001

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 6-7 December
Fifteen speakers, including Colin Haselgrove, Jonathan Williams, Simone Scheers and Bob Van Arsdell, will be presenting papers on aspects of Celtic coinage in Britain and Europe. For further details and an application form, contact Dr Philip de Jersey, Institute of Archaeology, 36 Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PG, tel. 01865 278249, e-mail philip.dejersey@arch.ox.ac.uk.

FIDEM

The 28th congress of the Federation Internationale de la Medaille will take place in Paris on 23-27 September 2002. The accompanying international exhibition of contemporary medals will be held in the Monnaie de Paris.

INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC CONGRESS

Madrid, 15-19 September 2003

The 13th International Numismatic Congress in Madrid will be organised on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport by the Department of Numismatics of the National Archaeological Museum, with the collaboration of the International Numismatic Commission. The Congress venue will be the Palace of Exhibitions and Congresses, situated in the business quarter of Madrid, just a few minutes from the historic centre of the city. During the Congress, the Survey of Numismatic Research (1996-2001) will be published and a medal issued commemorating the 13th International Numismatic Congress.

If you are interested in participating or want to receive further information about the Congress, contact: Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Departamento de Numismática, Serrano 13, 28001 Madrid, Spain, fax 0034 914 316 840, e-mail num@man.es. The official website of the conference is being set up at <http://www.mcu.es/cin-madrid>; meanwhile more information can be found at <http://www.man.es/congresos/index.htm>.

LECTURE DIARY

September

- 25 BNS Robert Heslip, *Out of balance: weights and foreign coin in early eighteenth-century Ireland*.

October

- 16 RNS to be announced
23 BNS The Linecar Lecture: Professor James Graham-Campbell, *The Cuerdale hoard* (title to be confirmed).

November

- 20 RNS To be announced
27 BNS Anniversary Meeting and Presidential Address.

Contacts:

British Art Medal Society (BAMS)

Philip Attwood, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG, tel. 020 7323 8260. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 5.30pm, Cutler's Hall, Warwick Lane, London EC4

British Association of Numismatic Societies (BANS)

Mr P. H. Mernick, c/o Bush, Hoake, Allen Ltd, Blackhorse Lane, London E17 6JP, tel. 020 8523 6631

British Numismatic Society (BNS)

Charles Farthing, c/o Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB, tel. 01329 284 661. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 6.00pm at the Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1.

British Numismatic Trade Association (BNTA)

Mrs Carol Carter, General Secretary, PO Box 474A, Thames Ditton, Surrey, KT7 0WJ, tel. 020 8398 4290, fax: 020 8398 4291

Oriental Numismatic Society (ONS)

Mr P. Smith, 9 Grandison Road, London SW11 6LS, tel. 020 7228 2826

Royal Numismatic Society (RNS)

Ms V. Hewitt, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London WC1 3DG, tel. 020 7323 8228. Unless otherwise stated all meetings held at 5.30pm, Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London WC1

AUCTIONS AND FAIRS

Sotheby's now sell coins on-line at www.sothebys.amazon.com. Lots are usually on for two weeks.

September

- 5 Auction. The collection of Buckinghamshire tokens, medals and paper money formed by Peter Preston-Morley, plus ancient, British and world coins, tokens, historical and art medals, banknotes and numismatic books. Regus Conference Centre, 12 St James's Square, London SW1, tel. 020 7499 5022, e-mail auctions@dnw.co.uk.
19 Auction (Mail Bid Sale). CNG 58 (2000-2200 lots). Classical Numismatic Group Inc, 14 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4PP, tel. 020 7495 1888, fax 020 7499 5916.

October

- 3 Coinex. Ancient, English & foreign coins and commemorative medals. Spink.
5/7 Coinex London 2001. London Marriot Hotel, Duke Street, Grosvenor Square, London W1. Enquiries: Mrs Carol Carter, BNTA, tel. 020 8398 4290, fax. 020 8398 429, e-mail www.bnta@lineone.net.
5 Auction. World banknotes. Spink.
8/9 Auction. 27 British and world coins, commemorative medals, banknotes. Baldwin's, tel. 020 7930 9808, fax 020 7930 9450, e-mail auctions@baldwin.sh.

November

- 15 Auction. Ancient, English & foreign coins and commemorative medals. Spink.
21 Auction. Ancient, British and world coins, tokens, historical and art medals, banknotes and numismatic books. Regus Conference Centre, 12 St James's Square, London, SW1, tel. 020 7499 5022, e-mail auctions@dnw.co.uk.
22 Auction. Orders, decorations and campaign medals. Spink.
24-26 Auction. Coins, banknotes and stamps of East Asia; banknotes of Hong Kong and China. Spink Hong Kong.

December

- 11/12 Auction. Triton Sale: CNG 59 (1500-2000 lots). Classical Numismatic Group Inc, 14 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4PP, tel. 020 7495 1888, fax 020 7499 5916.

Unless stated otherwise all auctions held at addresses listed. Dates may be subject to alteration.

Baldwin's: Royal Society of Arts, John Adam St, London

Glendining's: 101 New Bond St, London W1Y 9LG

Christie's/Spink & Son: 69 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4ET