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SOME NEW COIN TYPES FROM SURASENA

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Some years ago, I bought a small bag of Surasena coins reportedly from Mathura. The bag lay unexamined for all this time, but I recently turned my attention to it. There were 70 coins in the bag, of quite mixed quality. This leads me to believe that this group is not cherry-picked from a larger hoard. Rather, it constitutes either a complete hoard, or a reasonably random sample from a larger hoard. The group also contains some types not recorded in Anne van't Haaff's catalogue of Surasena coins and an interesting overstrike. These coins are presented here, along with a summary description of the parcel. Full-colour enlargements of all the coins in the group are available on the CoinIndia website.²

A summary of the types present in the group is presented in Table 1. We see that a wide variety of types is included, almost all of type 1.



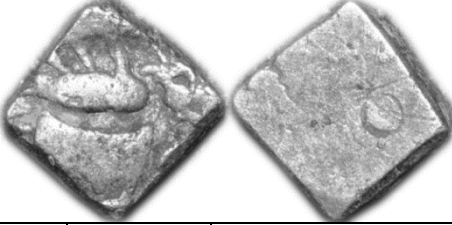

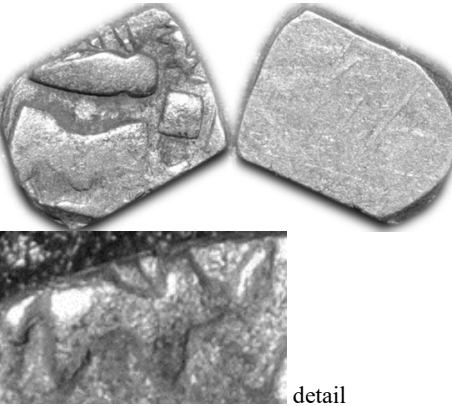
Table 1: Coin Types in the Group

Coin Type	Number of Coins
1.2	3
1.3	5
1.4	1
1.9	3
1.10	4
1.11	3
1.12	7
1.15	6
1.16	5
1.17	1
1.18	2
1.27	1
1.29.4	2
1.29.10	2
1.29.12	2
1.29.15	1
1.29.16	1
1.29.18	3
New type A	5
New type B	2
Unidentified (type 1)	7
2.2	1
2.3	1
2.7	1
Overstrike 1.18 / 2.2	1
TOTAL	70

Table 2 presents images of the eight most interesting coins in the group. Coins 1-5 are all examples of an unrecorded type (here called new type A). The type consists of the usual fish over lion right of type 1, along with a new combination of auxiliary symbols which includes a star and two taurines facing each other. An eye copy of the type is presented in Figure 1.

Table 2: Images and Details of 8 Coins

No.	Inv #	Details
		
1	mh34.42	New type A 1.67 gm 10 x 9 mm

		
2	mh34.43	New type A 1.81 gm 10 x 9 mm
		
3	mh34.44	New type A 1.78 gm 11 x 8 mm
		
4	mh34.45	New type A 1.74 gm 9 x 9 mm
		
5	mh34.46	New type A 1.73 gm 11 x 9 mm
		
6	mh34.49	New type B 1.76 gm 10 x 8 mm

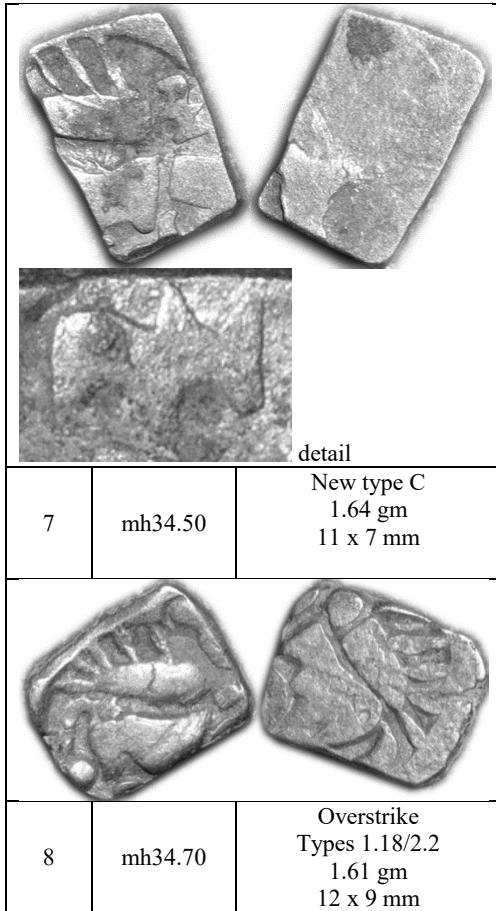


Fig 1: Eye copy of Type A



Fig 2: Eye copy of Type B



Fig 3: Eye copy of Type C

Coins 6 and 7 are both new types (denoted B and C) that look almost the same and feature the first animals among the auxiliary symbols in the Surasena coinage. At first, both I and Anne van't Haaff thought they were the same type. Looking vertically at the symbol in coin 7, I had thought it was an altar. Anne suggested the possibility that both coins featured the image of a dog. But, with the benefit of digital enlargements, we can see that the two coins feature different animals. Type B features an elephant to right facing a solid square with a taurine below and type C displays a humped bull to right with the same solid square and taurine in front. The detail photos in Table 2 show the animals quite clearly. Eye copies of the types are available in Figures 2 and 3. To my eye, the artistry involved in the carving of these tiny animals is very high, much higher than that of the fish and lion that we see on almost all the coins.

Finally, coin 8 is an interesting overstrike which features type 1.18 on one side and type 2.2 on the other. Although both punches look quite fresh, the reverse punch of type 2.2 seems to be somewhat flatter and therefore is likely to have been punched first. Whether this says anything about the relative chronology of types 1 and 2 is difficult to say, but it is suggestive of at least this version of type 1.18 succeeding a type 2.2.

Notes

¹ Boston University. I thank Anne van't Haaff for helpful email exchanges, especially in identifying some of the coin types; any errors remain my responsibility.

² The images are available at <http://coinindia.com/galleries-surasena.html>.

A NOTE ON FORGERIES OF BACTRIAN BRONZE COINS

By Heinz Gawlik

Forgery in coinage is a recurrent issue and several paper deal with it in the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society already (Bracey 2008, Tandon 2010). I would like to bring an actual incident to the notice of collectors of oriental coins. I became a witness to somebody offering a large lot of Bactrian AE coins to various dealers participating in the World Money Fare in Berlin on 6th February 2016. All the contacted dealer refused to buy the lot or even selected coins. One of the dealers I am friendly with provided me the chance to have a closer look at the lot. The coins were AE units of Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian kings mixed with some common Kushan coins. All coins have had a dark brownish patina and looked very oily. The person explained that the coins had been bought in Afghanistan and were found as together a hoard. The oil was used to separate and clean the coins. The whole lot looked very suspicious to me because a number of coins looked almost identical. This was a clear indication of cast forgeries, made in moulds, as no two ancient coins look exactly alike. The minting process of die-struck coins always leaves differences on a coin. Such differences come from un-even flans, the alignment of flan and dies but also the strike itself. Moreover, on all ancient coins there would be differences in wear by circulation or even storage over the years.