

EXAMINING THE MUSLIM NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE IN SRI LANKA TO COMPREHEND THE MUSLIM HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

Numerous different Islamic coins have been found in Lanka. Some of them, meanwhile, are hardly notable for the island's economic history. Although they may have been incorrectly identified as coins, they are either not coins at all or have only ever been discovered in commercial settings. Although several Islamic coins have been discovered in Sri Lanka, it is still unknown if these coins originated there, in India, or in other Muslim world. We are only on solid ground when dealing with Islamic money. The aim of this research is to develop a catalogue of coins with origins that have never before been seen in Sri Lanka and to examine their significance in light of the island's political and economic history. The complicated religious, political, and economic ties that Sri Lanka had with the Muslim world for many centuries are what have shaped the island nation's history. As a consequence of these ties, several Islamic coins have been discovered. The under discussion is came from multiple sites excavated by different mission and now on display at three different museums i.e. National Museum Colombo, Archaeological Museum Anuradhapura, Gall Maritime Museums of Sri Lanka and Jaffna Museum were analysis.

Keywords: Coins, Muslim in Sri Lanka, Heritage, Trade.

INTRODUCTION

The following chapters provide a detailed analysis of the finds of Islamic coins and their imitations, based on the material presented in the catalogue section of this study. Each of these chapters is naturally speculative to some degree. While the results of the research laid out in this chapter stand on fundamentally solid ground, the more far-reaching deductions offered in chapters II and III must be taken as partly hypothetical. Based on the coin evidence, the present research will add some considerations on the difficult problem of the economic and monetary conditions prevalent in ancient Sri Lanka, as well as on the equally hypothetical course of long-distance between the western world and the Indian Subcontinent in late antiquity. These chapters should therefore be regarded as both theoretical, provisional and perhaps, strictly speaking, should not have been incorporated in to a book primarily intended as a neutral presentation of the ancient coins discovered in Sri Lanka, However, it was tempting to go one step further and to try to evaluate the collected material, although constantly bearing in mind its incomplete nature and the serious difficulties that it sometimes presents. Coins are a significant resource for studying a country's history. It seems sense that India, a sizable neighbor, would have a substantial impact on Sri Lanka's coinage systems given their proximity and long-standing close relations. Trade relations with the Arab, Persian, Spanish, and Venetian countries often resulted in the inflow of their financial resources as well.

The first coins used in Sri Lanka, according to mythology, were flat slabs of silver with several little images hammered into them, including peacocks and human figures. From the final three centuries BC to the first century AD and even later, they were known as purana. The earliest made and documented inscribed coins for Sri Lanka are the "Sri Lanka Vibhu" and "Lakshmi type" coins. The first series' reverse has a sitting person with the words "Sri Lanka vibhu" written in Nagari script, while the obverse features a

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standing figure to the right. The word "Laksmi" is written in Nagari on the gold coins with Lakshmi figurines.

In order to illustrate a wealthy civilization that formerly thrived in the south, Wing Commander Rajah Wickremesinha and Professor Osmund Bopearachchi of the Sorbonne have acquired crucial evidence on the money used there. They provide numismatic and archaeological evidence of intra- and inter-regional commerce in "Ruhunu, an Ancient Civilization Re-visited," a detailed study that summarizes their results. Researchers are still struggling to fully comprehend the numismatic information found during recent archaeological digs. Little to no information is known about the coins discovered in Mantai (Carswell, 1987), Anuradhapura: Citadel (Bopearachchi, 1990), Abhayagiri (Wikramagamage, 1983), and Sigiriya (Bandaranayake, 1977).

The most important ancient towns in Sri Lanka, as in India, were inland yet each had a port on the coast. Nearby is the Aruvi Aru River, which formerly linked Anuradhapura in the interior of Sri Lanka to Manthai, the busiest port. It is also no coincidence that the ancient city of Polonnaruwa is situated across the Mahaveli River, which drains into the sea not far from Gokanna. Similar to Tissamaharama, the former capital of Sri Lanka in the south, which was established on the left bank of the Kirindi Oya and connected to the historic port city of Kirinda, Tissamaharama rose to prominence throughout its illustrious history. They have discovered several artifacts in their studies that directly relate to marine and interior commerce. These artifacts, which were discovered in the Tissamaharama villages of Akurugoda, Minigodana, and Tikirigodana, include coins, seals, sealings, intaglios, and beads that "oblige us to change all preconceived notions about Tissamaharama and ancient ruins." The authors' primary goal was to compile a list of some of these discoveries and provide a broad overview of their historical significance.

The writers claim to have discovered locally inscribed coins that had never previously been found in Sri Lanka and that can be dated at least a thousand years earlier than the existing inscribed coin series. The coins may be dated between the 2nd century BC and the 2nd century AD using paleography. The fact that both persons and lords and households have issued them makes them special. They also note that the finding of coin molds, coin-filled pots, and coin hoards at the same location shows that monetary exchanges arose in these locations. Uninscribed coins include feminine characters, various creatures, such as the elephant, lion, horse, and fish, as well as different geometric patterns. Arab traders who were active in the Indian Ocean from the 10th century forward may have introduced Islamic currency to the island. A significant quantity of Sasanian coins are now recorded on the Island, in addition to Roman third brass discovered in thousands dating to the late Imperial era. Persian merchants were present in Sri Lanka, according to Cosmas Indicopleustes, The Egyptian Greek of the sixth century of our period (Indicopleustes, 1973).

According to him Sri Lanka was filling a position previously held by Western India by transporting goods between the East and the West. The island is a major destination for ships from all regions of India, as well as from Persia and Ethiopia, and it also sends a large number of its own ships to distant ports, according to Cosmas (XI, 15), proving the island's prominence in global trade. It also receives silk, aloes, clove, sandal, and their products from the inner nations, including China and other markets in that region. It then sends these goods to the outer ports, including Male, where pepper is grown, Kalliana, where copper is made, Sindu, where musk or coster is worshipped, as well as Androstantchus, Persia, and Homerite country. Then to Adole. The island sends its own goods to each of these markets and inner ports at the same time as it receives traffic from them in return (McCrindle, 1901).

By publishing three Sasanian King Yezdigerd I coins (AD 397–417). According to the theory put out by Cordrington, sporadic discoveries of tiny copper pieces among the "third brass" indicate that Persian traders operated on the Island. (Codrington, 1975). Sri Lanka (Taprobane) served as the primary entrepôt for commerce between the western and eastern Indian Oceans throughout Late Antiquity, despite the fact that Po-ssu (Persians) are first recorded in Chinese records in the fourth century. Merchants from Iran and Ethiopia travelled to Sri Lanka where they bought silk, aloe, cloves, and sandalwood that had been transported by Indian ships from China and other places (Fiey, 1968). Other than perhaps cash and maybe Persian horses, it doesn't seem that we know what the Persians and Ethiopians traded for these goods (Daryaee, 2003).

Events in China, where the collapse of the Han dynasty in 220 CE terminated government-sponsored export business along the northern overland route to western Asia, had an impact on the character of long-distance east-west trade in Asia. It seems that the north-south partition of China facilitated the growth of commerce from south China through the sea route to the West. It seems that when the Sasanian Empire declined, Muslim Arabs started to migrate to Sri Lanka and the Malabar beaches, and nearly simultaneously, Chinese merchants expanded their commerce with the island. Southern India seems to have been considerable interest in the Persian Silver Abbasis and Islamic, which were imported in bulk. Ceylon, which was transported from Persia for use in Coromandel, seems to have served as a clearing house in the trade (Codrington, 1924).

Objectives

The following objectives are for this article.

1. Investigating the Arab trade connecting in Sri Lanka.
2. Examining the Muslim Numismatic Evidence in Sri Lanka
3. Investigating the Coins related to the Muslim heritage.
4. Cataloguing the Muslim Coins in Sri Lanka.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Multi-pronged approaches will be adopted during the study of the Muslim coins records. For this purpose data will be collected through different sources including archaeological field survey, collection of the archival records lying in different libraries, Museums and archaeology departments. Similarly, the Muslim periods artefacts lying in different Museums in Sri Lanka will also be recorded for further analysis. A detailed catalogue of coins and other inscriptional records has prepared.

HISTORY OF MUSLIM NUMISMATIC IN CEYLON

Playing a significant role in transferring goods between the East and beginning the island's pivotal position in world trade, a job that was formerly filled by Western India. The island is a popular destination for ships from all regions of India, as well as from Persia and Ethiopia, according to Cosmas (XI. 15), and it also sends a lot of its own citizens to distant ports. And from the inner countries, I'm referring to China and other trade centers in that direction, it receives silk, aloes, clove-wood, sandal-wood, and their products, which it then transfers to the outer ports along with sesame-wood and clothing-related materials; for it is also a major I'm referring to Male, where pepper grows, and to Kalliana, where copper is a major trade center; and to Sindu also, where musk or coster is obtained The island simultaneously exports its own goods to each of these markets, receiving in return the traffic from them and sending it to the inner ports. In his publication of three Sasanian king Yezdigerd I coins (AD 397–417), Codrington advanced the theory that sporadic discoveries of tiny copper pieces among the "third brass" indicate Persian trade with the island. We also include three more Sasanian coins that have never been seen in Sri Lanka.

With the decadence of the Sasanian Empire, the Muhammadan Arabs began to reach the Malabar coasts and Sri Lanka. Almost at the same period Chinese traders developed their commercial activities with the island. Hundreds of coins belonging to the Sung and southern Sung dynasties found at Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Yapahuwa, Kurunagala and many other places in the country proclaim commercial and cultural exchanges between China and ancient Sri Lanka. The Arabs are said to have arrived on the Malabar Coast in AD 844, and to have settled at Kiyalpadanam in the Pandyan kingdom in the same century. Of this port, under the name of Cail, Marco Polo writes "All ships that arrive from the West, including those carrying traders with horses and other goods for sale, touch at this city, as well as those from Homes, Kis, Aden, and all of Arabia. And as a result, a lot of people from the surrounding countryside congregate in the city of Cail, which generates a lot of commerce (Yule, 2022).

In the thirteenth century the Muslim were of such importance at this place that Malik Taqiya'llah bin 'Abdu'r-rahmin bin Muhammad at-Tibi was minister and adviser to the Pandyan king, and held the government of Fatan, Malifatan, and Qiya; his brother was under a contract to send yearly from the Persian Gulf to Mabbar (South India) 11,400 Arab horses, each of which was reckoned worth 220 current dinars of red gold (Campo, 2009).

The traditions relating to the settlement of the Moors in Ceylon are various, one giving the date as in the reign of the Khalif Abdu'l-malik bin Marwan, and another, which is the more generally received account, placing it in AD 1011-12 in which year they came from Kayalpaddanam to Beruwala on the west coast of the Island. Another version, recorded in a report of the Kandyan chiefs in 1829, states that the Moors came first under Qadir Shah, who was defeated in the time of Pandita Parikrama Baba in the year of the Nirvanaa AD. 1824 or 1236, and that later, under the usurper Vattimi, a Moor brought over the Chalias to Beruwala this, however, is usually associated with their settlement. The year AD.949 on the Kufic stone inscription, once in the Muuslim cemetery of Colombo, if correct, would point to an earlier date for their arrival (Trans, 1545). This must be dated at least as early as the reign of 'Abdul Malik in view of al-Biláduri's statement that in the time of this Khalif "the king of the Isle of Rubies sent as a present... Certain Muslim girls who had been born in his country, the orphan daughters of merchants who had de there a story which probably is the basis of the first-mentioned tradition.

There is no doubt that the Ārabs visited Ceylon from a very early date. However, it was during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that they reached the height of their commercial prosperity and political influence in the Island, whatever the truth regarding the settlement of the Moors as a distinct race. Their activities, however, were not always of a peaceful nature. The Batuta, who was in the Island in 1344, speaks of Colombo as the seat of "the Wazir, prince of the see. Jalasti." who had under his command five hundred Abyssinians, and some six years later, John de Marignolli mentions a "Saracen" tyrant Choja Joan (Khwajah Jahin) at Perivilis, by which Beruwala is probably meant. Yet from the mention of the "inner and outer Madigés" or bullock carriage departments in the contemporary *Lankatilaka* inscription it would appear that many of the Ārab descendants of mixed race and their converts, now known as Moors, had settled down as subjects of the Sinhalese king

Trade in the Ārabian Sea was carried a through two principal routes, the one leading by Aden through the Red See and to Alexandria, the other by way of the emporium of Hormuz up the Persian Gulf; was in a flourishing state in the thirteenth century, as is indicated by the extract from Marco-Polo. Colombo at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese was the chief center of the Muslim trade, and probably had been such for a considerable period; it is, therefore, not surprising that all the medieval Muuslim coins of gold and silver have been found in the part of the Island, which lies between Colombo and the Kandyan mountains. Of these, the least rare are those of the Bahri Mamluks. A witness to the prestige of this dynasty in the East is the despatch of an embassy to Sultan Qalaunn by the King of Ceylon "Abou-Nekbah-Lebabah. According Magrizi, the Sinhalese sovereign had rejected an officer of alliance made him by the king of the Yemen, and now asked for the friendship of the Egyptian Sultan, at whose court the envoy arrived in the month of AD1283 (Quatremere, 1842).

Two coins of the Yemen, but somewhat later in date, have been found in the Island. In 1702, a Mughal trade ship set sail, laden with bags of newly minted silver rupees. The ship was wrecked off the southern coast of Lanka on the treacherous Great Basses Reef. A century passed by and Ceylon moved from Dutch hands to become a British crown colony and in another century and a half, regained its Independence. In order to shoot an underwater movie, Mike Wilson traveled to the Great Basses Reef in 1961 with two young American lads, Mark Smith, and Bobby Kriegel, Arthur Clarke continued to work on a junior-level novel about an Indian Ocean expedition while still in Colombo. He said in the addendum to the book:

Mike, Mark, and Bobby decided to take a very long swim and investigate a new region of the Reef far from the lighthouse one day when the water was too cloudy to film. They were about to turn back when Mike found something on the seabed that he had been looking for for a long time in vain. A little, old cannon that was only two feet long sparkled beautifully in the sunlight as if it had just recently been lost. Mike dug under the surface and discovered the little cannon, which was made of bronze. Another one similar in size but much more rusty was close by. Nothing more was immediately apparent, but it was clear that this was the scene of a collision. After an ancient ship or galleon is destroyed, the almost indestructible cannons left behind remain as silent witnesses to a sad history for years. With the eager assistance of the guys, Mike immediately started to painstakingly search for signs of further debris. He discovered a few lumps on the bottom that were covered with marine growths, which 99 out of 100 dives would have missed.

After removing the weeds, he understood that this was the kind of experience that almost every diver hopes to have but that only a very, very tiny fraction of them really have. They discovered a treasure on March 22. The first time that treasure had been found off our beach and the start of maritime archaeology in Sri Lanka were both a result of the catastrophe.

The film *Ran Muthu Duwa* produced by Mike Wilson and released in 1962 was the first Sinhala language film in color, and the first from Ceylon to involve underwater scenes. The central theme of the film was the discovery of these silver coins. The discovery is documented in detail in Arthur Clarke's book *The Treasure of the Great Reef* which was first published in 1964. Each of the lumps was a thousand silver rupee coins with a total weight of 11.6 Kg. (Clarke, 1964) The coins had encrusted together in that shape of the coir sack, which had rotted away, before being covered by coral and protected. When the lumps were broken, the coins close to the center were like newly minted.

Almost all of the silver rupee coins had been minted in Surat in 1113 AD in the 46th year of the reign of the Mogul emperor Aurangzeb. It has a Mint Mark of 4 dots (Brown's MM#193) in the quadrants of a cross with a central open circle. Muhammad Aurangzeb Alamgir, was enthroned on AD 1658 at Agra, but his formal coronation took place on the June 15, 1659. Islamic lunar calendar AH uses a year of 354.3671 days that starts in mid- AD. 622 when Prophet Muhammed and his followers in Mecca migrated to Medina, an event known as the Hijra. To convert to modern Gregorian dates multiply by 0.970224 AD and add 622.54. This gives the CE for the end of the AH year. Regnal Years are counted in Islamic Years with 1 being the 1st year of reign. The Islamic year 1113 AH started on 6th June 1701 AD and ended 28th May 1702. Regnal year 46 started on 1702.

March 30th. Aurangzeb 1113 AH coins are found with either year 45 or year 46. The 1113AH coins would have been minted in 1702 CE, April or May. There are probably over 600 different types of silver rupee coins minted in about 50 Indian mints, with a dozen different mint marks over the 51 regnal years of Aurangzeb, which are listed in the Lucknow catalog, which may not be complete. There are over 80 different types listed only for Surat Mint. (Clarke, 1964)

For Surat 1113/46 the Mint Mark is either four diamonds (MM#90) or four dots around a cross (MM#193) which appears on almost all the coins from this wreck. This mint mark was only used from 1113-1115 at Surat. Since the older mint mark M90 was also used on 46-year coins, 193 coins were probably struck in 1702 May and the ship-wreck would have happened soon after, in the summer of 1702. All known and published coins from this shipwreck 1113 AH and most of regnal year 46 with MM#193. In a sample of 1700 coins looked at by Hodge at ANA only 5 had year 45 (Clarke, 1964)

Although a few silver rupees of 1113/46 were known in Museum collections like the one at Lucknow from before the discovery of this ship-wreck, almost all of the coins of this year in the numismatic market of 1113 AD year are very probably from it. They frequently show up for sale on eBay and with coin dealers in Colombo and Galle. The rabic inscription on each side of the coin extends beyond the edge of the coin.

Shah Jahan's third son Aurangzeb constructed the Taj Mahal tomb in 1628 AD for his wife Mumtaz Mahal. When Aurangzeb died in 1707 AD at the age of almost 90, religious intolerance had undermined Akbar's aim of unification, and the empire had disintegrated swiftly. Approximately 600 coins were given to Mendel Peterson of the Smithsonian Institution in exchange for his assistance with the treasure's examination. Soon after the disastrous tsunami of 2004, I was presented silver coins from the Museum, and I have no idea where they may have been discovered. The Galle Maritime Museum has some of the coins that the Maritime Archaeology Unit found on exhibit.

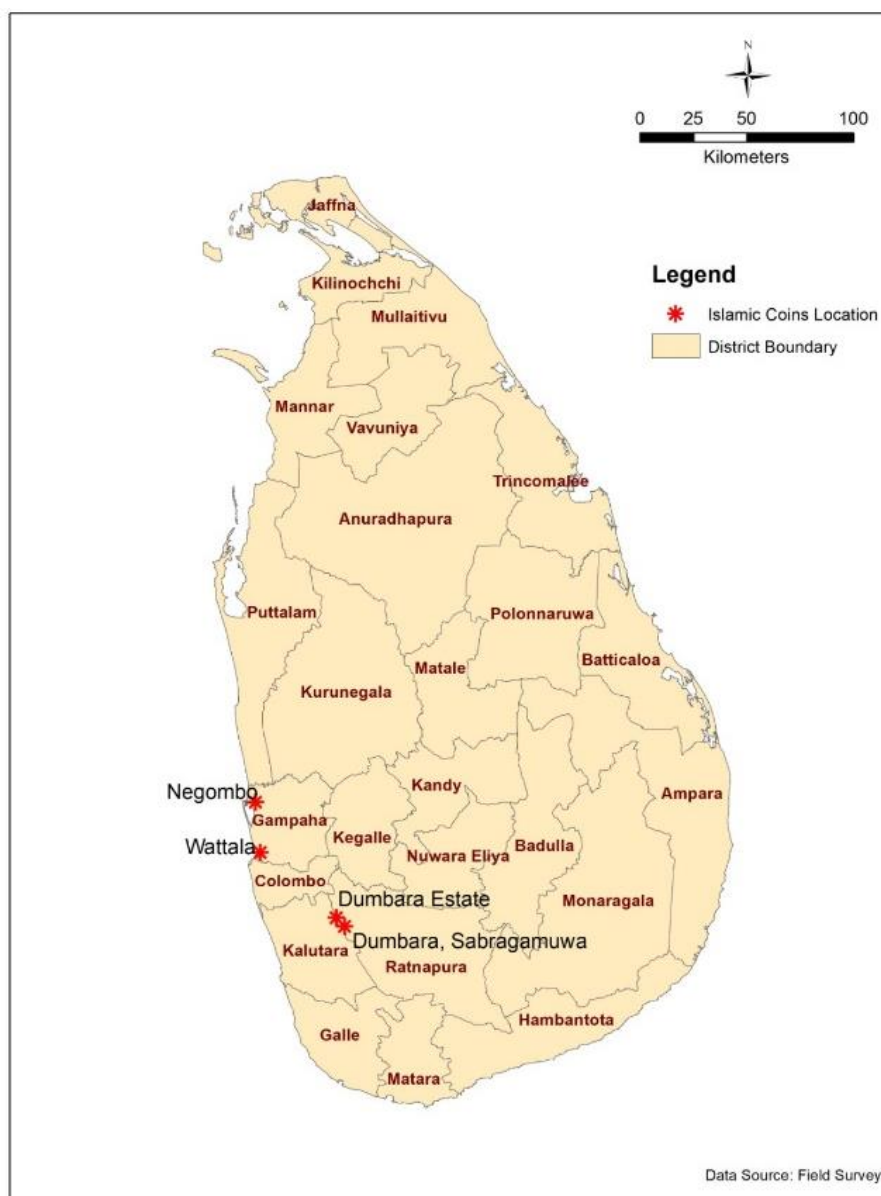


Figure 4.1 showing location of Sri Lanka found for Islamic coins (Jesmil, 2023)

Table 4.1. Places of Islamic coins in Sri Lanka (Source: Codrington, 1924)

Place	Quantity	Dynasty	Date
Negombo	1	Zangid	1251-2
Wattala	1	Zangid	1229-30 or 1231-32
Dumbara estate, Sabaragamuwa	1	Muwahid	1163-84
Dumbara estate, Sabaragamuwa	2	Bahri, Mumluk	1259-77
Dumbara estate, Sabaragamuwa	1	Abbasid	1213/4-1258
Weledara estate	5	Bahri, Mumluk	1259-77
Weledara estate	3	Persian Mongol	1265-84
Weledara estate	3	Abbasid	1213/4-1258
Telengipata	3	Bahri Mumluk	1259-77
Gampola	1	Persian Mongol	1265-82

Adding to this list not only new types of the already attested series, but also Islamic coinages so far unknown in the Sri Lankan context. These are Sasanian, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Persian Mongol. Delhi Sultans, we have categorized the coins subjected to discussion under their geographical origins. The lists of the coins with their initial description with specific time period are discussed below;

CONCLUSION

Archaeological discoveries of coins on the ports and political centers of Sri Lanka and South India demonstrate a concurrent growth in trade from the 18th to the 19th centuries, continuing prior interactions with Persia and forging new commercial links with China. We would want to look at how pilgrims or other religious pilgrims or traders may have travelled to trade in these places in order to comprehend better these links and the possible cultural and creative exchanges they may have afforded. The expansion of the Sinhala kingdom's commerce could have been the aim of this effort. Golden and silver coins that might be related to Baghdad's Muslim monarchs. The bulk of merchants in Sri Lanka's ports of Colombo, Beruvala, Kalpitiya, Chilaw, Weligama, Galle, and Hambantota in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries were Muslims. The origins of some of these Muslims were in Malasia and India, while those of others were in Arabia and Persia.

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ANNEXURE-I

Catalogs of Muslim Coins in Sri Lanka

Observation	Resevation	Description
		Abbas II (Safavid) Obverse: لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله على ولي الله Margin: محمد على حسن حسين على محمد جعفر
		Sultan Talimaps II (Safavid Ruler) (1135-44 AH) Obverse: لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله على ولي الله Reverse: بگيے سکه صاحقدان دد
		Shah Abbas Obverse: لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله على ولي الله Reverse: لگقے سکه صاحقرانے زدار توفيق حق محمد عباس ثانی
		Sher Shah Suri ۹۴۵ Obverse: فی عهدالامين الحامی Margin: خداالله Reverse: شیر شاه سلطان ابو ضرب ۹۵۱ Margin: السلطان العادل
		Ceylon Dutch occupation (1640-1802) Coin circulation 1784-89, 1 rupee Obverse: وع ولن دکمف نی کلم بو (Coin of the Dutch East Indian Company Colombo) Reverse: فوقو خریدہ سلوغ

		Money of the Island of Ceylon 1789
		Shamsuddin Bahman Obverse: اطعم بالله شمس الدنيا والدين Reverse: محمد شاه بمايون شاه السلطان
		Obverse: Muhammad Bin Tughlaq Shah محمد بن تغلق شاه Reverse: الامام العادل South Indian Coin
		Obverse: جلال الدين احسن شاه السلطان Reverse: السلطان الاعظم Sultanate of Madurai (1335-39) I pair/copper rupee.
		Obverse: غياث الدنيا والدين Reverse: محمد شاه السلطان Gujrat Sultanate half fallw (1442-51)
		Obverse: عادل شاه السلطان Reverse: السلطان الاعظم 1347-58 (Madurai Sultanate)

		Obverse: السلطان Obverse: السلطان شاه ١١٠٨
		Obverse: Alauddin Adaye Shah اوى شاه السلطان Reverse: علاو الدنيا والدين 1339 Madurai
		Primally state Mysore Obverse: Loin to left & sun in Kanmarase below date 183 (٥) Reverse: Krishna in center below ضرب ميسور
		“Surat junks,” was carrying a cargo of silver coins packed in sacks. Such coins were not used as currency; their value, rather, was as bullion—in other words, in the intrinsic value of the metal. All the coins were from India’s Mogul Empire, then at its peak under the rule of Aurangzeb, and all bear the same face value and date: 1702. They were minted in Surat, in the west of India
		Hyderabad State Mir Usman Ali (1911-1948) 2pai Obverse: آصف جاه نظام الملك بهادر Center, نو پائی Outside circle, جلوس ممنت مانوس ضرب فرخنده بنياد حيدرآباد

		Saudi Arabia ¼ Qrish Abdul Aziz Hejaz & Najid (1921-1953) Obverse: ملك الحجاز وسلطان نجد عبدالعزیز سعود Reverse: ربع قرش ١٣٣٣
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