

Unfold Coin Hoard's Jars of Bangladesh National Museum: An Historical Analysis

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Abstract: Coin hoards containing fairly good coins were buried around last centuries throughout Bangladesh. Most were not found in houses but hidden in the ground. This article sightsees different clarifications and suggests the variation of coin deposits in this region. Epidemics, natural disasters or religious offerings may elucidate different purpose and diversity of hoards.

Keywords: *Coin Hoards, Invasion, Coins.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Hoarding” in archaeology, describing the intentional act of accumulating and burying valuable items – a practice aimed at safeguarding or concealing wealth for various reasons. Coin hoard mirrors reasons such as preserving value, avoiding economic instability, or responding to societal mayhems.⁹ A coin hoard pertains to a group of coins found together without regard to how many, or what metal, or what denominations are involved. Coins found in jars, vases, or with part of the remains of the cloth bag or leathern purse in which the hoard had been stored usually accompany the coins. Numismatics extracts valuable information from the ancient world through studying coin hoards. There is a plethora of coin hoards, reputed and registered throughout different localities in Bangladesh. Items hoarded contain some rare historic interests by their types; Coins lost by accident, offered in sanctuaries or holy places; thrown away or hidden to secure the ownership of the owner. The last type of deposit is generally termed a coin hoard-the term to be used in this paper for any deposit composed of several coins put together on purpose, vague and not at all-the number required to constitute a deposit as being classified as a hoard.

➤ Abandoned Hoards

Coin hoards thus became applied, as is by other hoards, to groups of coins deposited carefully somewhere by their owner, who had no intention of ever returning for them. Usually, these hoards come from tombs, in which case they took on the same significance that an obol would have had when placed in the mouth of the deceased person for the purpose of paying the ferryman Charon. There would also be

votive hoards such as those found within the various sanctuaries or deposited in the foundations of temples or other edifices, as well as hoards collected from the tossing of coins into fountains or springs.

➤ Accidental Losses

Type of coinage fits quite well that, say, the five coins which fell into bad hands of unfortunate travelers losing them in the course of their journey would belong to this category, as do the coins from a wreck at sea now resting in the seabed. Depending on the case, these coins can have high worth or, more commonly, be of low worth. It will certainly be the study which holds interest in importance, merely because they haven't been collected, more in general, for any express purpose. In the majority of the cases, they ensure a clear dissection of the trend of the current circulation of coinage-and, why not of life itself- at some point in time, in that region they are discovered.¹

➤ Emergency Hoards

In terms of war, civil strife, or invasion by enemies, hoarders hid their most prized possessions in haste for rescue with the purpose of returning either themselves or their relations to reclaim it after the danger passed. Such hoards contain coins belonging to classes of coins similar to the types of coins which might get lost if the owner had no preference for the items he hid. All the same, such groups of coins reflect quite directly the monetary reality of a particular region at a particular moment in time. Coins can be of either very small or very large value-depending on the financial status of the owner or other circumstances.

➤ *Saving Hoards*

In the classical sense of saving hoards, they are hoards that represent the desire of some people to save themselves for the possibility of an uncertain future. In this case, the owner gradually, over a long time – sometimes stretching into many years – saved along the way high value coins which would then bequeathed to descendants. Of course, some catastrophic or unexpected event, such as their death, might deprive the individuals and collectors of enjoying and putting to use the coins they had saved. The coins in a saving hoard were usually very well chosen parts- consisting of precious metals and high denominations- almost mint condition whenever as much as possible. For security purposes, they were always hidden in natural hiding places, inside house walls, clefts in rocks, under the floor. It was well and briefly stated: 'the ground was our ancestors' safe'. These hoards are the expression of the mentality which used to bank before the banking era itself. However, they do not contain the informative immediacy which is characteristic of the other hoards, since they do not show the coinages current at a given time in the area where they were found.

II. METHODOLOGY

This article is grounded on primary (field experience) and secondary (literature) method. Document analysis at

Bangladesh National Museum, Coin analysis, decipher were the base of this study. It is obvious that Bangladesh needs ethical considerations in conducting research in the context of numismatics and ensuring the protection of coin hoards as well as other artifacts.

➤ *Research Objectives*

- To scrutinize the impact of archaeological progression of numismatics activities in Bangladesh.
- To observe the approaches and strategies.
- To classify the limitations or challenges in practicing.



➤ *Jar from Raipara, Dohar, Dhaka, 1988; Composition: 899 Silver Coins.*


This early hoard from Raipara, Dohar, Dhaka was brought to light in the excavations of lake in 1988. Accession No. of this jar is 1988.5015. Basically, it was a Copper Coin holder (pot), lower part of the pot is missing and damaged and one side of the lid is damaged. Weight of it was 1247 gram, measurement was 18.5 x 23.3 cm². It contained coins of Sultanat, Tripura, Bahmani, Mughal and coins of other era. Deputy Keeper Md. Rezaul Karim brought it through local police and consent of Director General Dr. Enamul Hoque.







Fig 1 Coin Jar of Raipara, Dohar, Dhaka, 1988 (Accession No. 1988.5015)

➤ *Representative Coins Founded in this Jar*

| | |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of ALA-UD-DIN HOSSEN SHAH, Sultan of Bengal (1493-1519 AD) Accession No. 1988.4163, Weight : 10.69 gm, Diameter : 32.09 cm | |

| | |
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| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of <u>G</u>HIYASUDDIN MAHMUD SHAH, Sultan of Bengal (1533-38 AD) Accession No. 1988.4825, Weight : 10.55 gm, Diameter : 24.77 cm | |

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|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of NASIR-UD-DIN MUHAMMAD HUMAYUN, Mughal Emperor (1508-56AD) Accession No. 1988.4873, Weight : 10.41 gm , Diameter : 28.24 cm | |

| | |
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|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of SHER SHAH, Mughal Emperor (1540-45AD) Accession No. 1988.4925, Weight : 10.40 gm, Diameter : 27.47 cm | |



➤ *Jar from Chandpur, 1990; Composition: 186 Silver Coins.*

The jar from Chandpur was preserved in treasury of Chandpur DC office. Accession No. of this jar is 1990.1874(1-2). This Copper Coin jar was damaged and had no knob. Weight of it was 741 gram, measurement was 17x

8.8 cm². It contained coins of British era (Queen Victoria with crown-159 nos., Queen Victoria without crown-6 nos. and William IV-21nos.). Exploration Officer Asit Baran Paul brought it through help of NDC and consent of Director General Dr. Enamul Hoque.



Fig 2 Coin jar of Chandpur,1990 (Accession No.1990.1874(1-2))

➤ *Representative Coins Founded in this Jar*

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|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| <p align="center">Silver Coin of VICTORIA QUEEN (Half Rupee) Accession No. 1990.1865 , Weight : 5.75 gm, Diameter : 24.38 cm</p> | |
|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| <p align="center">Silver Coin of VICTORIA QUEEN (One Rupee) Accession No. 1990.1739 , Weight : 11.56 gm, Diameter : 31.64 cm</p> | |



➤ *Jar from Dargam, Satoria, Manikganj, 1994; Composition: 50 Silver Coins.*

This jar from Dargam, Satoria, Manikganj was found in sudden pit digging in 1994. It was a sudden find. Accession No. of this jar is 1994.2504. Weight of this metal jar was 612







gram, measurement was 11.8 x 11 cm². It contained coins of British period (Queen Victoria, Victoria Impress, George the 5th, Adward the 7th etc.). Accession No. of these coins are 1994.2454-1994.2504. Judicial Magistrate Syed Nurul Islam brought it to Bangladesh National Museum as gift.



Fig 3 Jar from Dargam, Satoria, Manikganj, 1994 (Accession No. 1994.2504)

➤ *Representative Coins Founded in this Jar*



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| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of GEORGE V KING EMPEROR, One Rupee India, 1912 Accession No.1994.2479 , Weight : 11.60 gm, Diameter : 30.58 cm | |
|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of Victoria Empress, One Rupee India, 1892 Accession No.1994.2459 , Weight : 11.45gm, Diameter : 30.57 cm | |
|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of Victoria Queen, One Rupee India, 1862 Accession No. 1994.2454 , Weight : 11.43gm, Diameter : 30.66 cm | |

➤ *Jar from Mithapukur, Rangpur, 2003; Composition: 54 Silver Coins.*

This jar was found in sudden pit digging in 2003 by Mr. Ayub Ali of Bujruk Tajpur, Kafrikhal, Mithapukur, Rangpur. Accession No. of this jar is 2003.406. Weight of this metal jar was 1046 gram, measurement was 18 x 18 cm². It

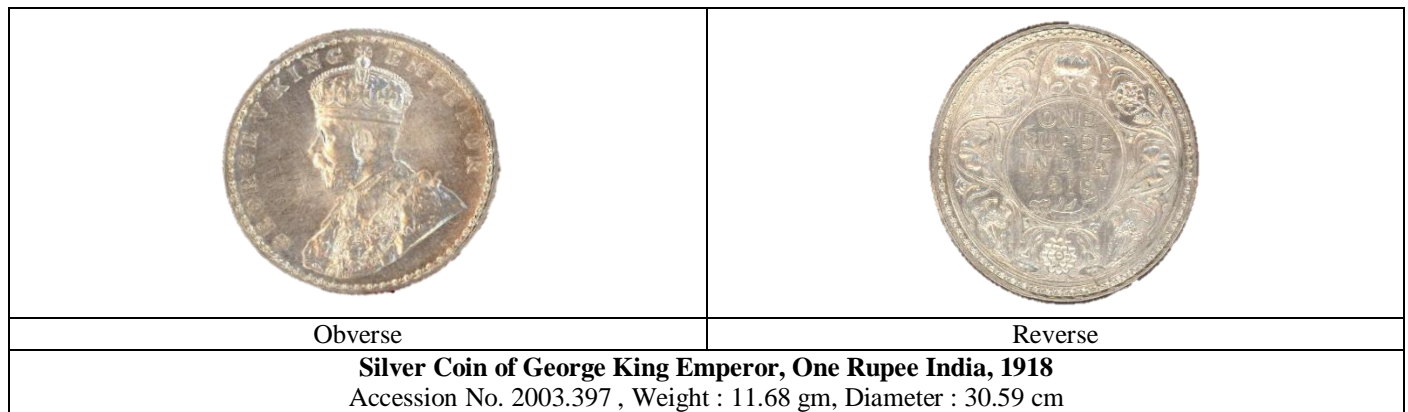
contained coins of British period (Queen Victoria/Victoria Impress-17 nos., George the 5th- 19 nos., Adward the 7th- 18 nos. etc.). Accession No. of these coins are 1994.2454-1994.2504. Deputy Keeper Dr. Md. Rezaul Karim brought it to Bangladesh National Museum with consent of Director General Dr. Iftekharul Awal.



Fig 4 Jar from Mithapukur, Rangpur, 2003 (Accession No. 2003.406)

➤ *Representative Coins Founded in this Jar*

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| Obverse | Reverse |
| <p align="center">Silver Coin of Victoria Queen, One Rupee India, 1862 Accession No. 2003.354 , Weight : 11.54 gm, Diameter : 30.79 cm</p> | |
| | |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| <p align="center">Silver Coin of Victoria Empress, One Rupee India, 1877 Accession No. 2003.360 , Weight : 11.56 gm, Diameter : 30.64 cm</p> | |
| | |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| <p align="center">Silver Coin of Edward VII King Emperor, One Rupee India, 1903 Accession No. 2003.371 , Weight : 11.56 gm, Diameter : 30.66 cm</p> | |



➤ *Jar from Akhaura, Brahmanbaria, 2016; Composition: 470 Silver Coins.*

It's a Coin receptacle (container with two lids). Mostly, middle portion is extinct and damaged. found in sudden digging of Chowdhury House Durga Temple, Ganganagar, Mogra, Akhaura, Brahmanbaria in 2016. Accession No. of this jar is 2016.942(1-2). Weight of this metal jar was 2407 gram (The weight of the 1st part is 1850 grams, the weight of







the 2nd part is 383 grams and the weight of the 3rd part is 174 grams), measurement was 17 x 24 cm². It contained coins of British period (Queen Victoria-63 nos., Victoria Impress-164 nos., George the 5th- 75 nos., Adward the 7th- 168 nos. etc.). Accession No. of these coins are 2016.472-2016.941. Deputy Keeper Dr. Md. Rezaul Karim brought it to Bangladesh National Museum with consent of Director General Dr. Iftekharul Awal .



Fig 5 Jar from Akhaura, Brahmanbaria, 2016, (Accession No. 2016.942(1-2))

➤ *Representative Coins Founded in this Jar*



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| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of VICTORIA QUEEN, One Rupee India, 1862 Accession No. 2016.474 , Weight : 11.60 gm, Diameter : 30.63 cm | |
|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of EDWARD VII KING EMPEROR, One Rupee India, 1907 Accession No. 2016.534 , Weight : 11.61 gm, Diameter : 30.69 cm | |
|  |  |
| Obverse | Reverse |
| Silver Coin of EDWARD VII KING EMPEROR, One Rupee India, 1903 Accession No. 2016.774 , Weight : 11.54 gm, Diameter : 30.71 cm | |

➤ Study of Hoards

Coinage became a important historical reconstructive element. In recent decades, several new interpretations have been provided and started to recognize the danger of that unidimensional justification. There were numerous causes of the deposits of money to describe and interpret hoards, most importantly ceremonial deposits or offerings, to be added to the interpretation. Things dig up for multiple reasons, and different times had different attitudes toward them. This paper will argue that by far most of the coin hoards were deposited there because the assumption of loss, either theft or misplacement, without expectation of future retrieval; often those deposits were never recovered due to some disaster or cataclysmic event. Somehow, these hoards could be abandoned because of a violent historical event. There is no possibilities of religious deposit, but needed a vast study in this field.

➤ Challenges in the Study of Coin Hoards – Discovery and Dating

There are many recurring challenges a historian faces when studying coin hoards, the first being the circumstances of the discovery. Whenever a coin hoard derives from archaeological excavations it is possible to determine precisely the chronological order of individual archaeological stratigraphic units and to date the rest of the chronologically less-tangible artefacts, discovered within the same layers of soil. Three dates should be applied to coin hoards: the date at which the majority of coins were assembled, the date of the latest coin in the hoard and the estimated date at which the hoard was buried.⁹ The most recent coin is of critical importance and the identification of the mint and estimated striking date helps to determine the terminus post quem of the hoard. The date at which the latest coin was struck is reasonably easy to determine and reasonably secure, but it is almost impossible to determine when that coin was added to

the hoard. To use that date as the time of the burying of the hoard may be correct, but we have no way of confirming that. The only firm way to date it is by a stratigraphic argument on the position of the hoard in a dated excavated sequence. Therefore coins published from a site without archaeological context (the deposit in which they were found described in its stratigraphic position) cannot give us safe, reliable information. Coin hoards can enable precise determination of the time of the archaeological layer in which it was found, as well as clarify a number of other questions connected with the flow of money in circulation, with the relative chronology of individual coins or coin emissions, and monetary history in general. This is only possible if the data concerning the site is determined and documented as accurately as possible. Therefore, when dealing with coin hoards the quantity (the number) is certainly not as important as quality (context of coin finds). Coins to be an absolute chronological factor, on the other hand 'delay factor', which is the time the coin entered circulation after minting in the region of its later hoarding, which is fairly unreliable. How much the coin had been used at the time of its burial, by investigating its condition, since the greater or lesser use of a coin is an important element in establishing objectively how long the coin was in circulation before becoming part of the site. An analysis of coin hoards should always respect the composition of the hoard. The dimension of the hoard can disclose whether the hoard was personal property, family wealth or official character, although only the circumstances of the discovery can reveal whether they were military or civilian treasures. An analysis of the appearance of coins of individual mints very often show that in terms of monetary mass, coins from the nearest mint to the site always predominate, which also reflects the currency circulation.¹⁰

➤ *Significance of these Hoards*

Economically important coin hoards in Bangladesh are also significant historically and culturally. They are capable of introspecting on the past of the region. Coins remain significant numismatic sources to provide vital evidence of the political and economic history of a locale. They mark the evolution of trade, commerce and governance. Coins- the imprint of the period will often reflect cultural and religious beliefs. They also carry images of rulers, deities and other significant societal symbols. Coins indicate the economic situation and trade bondage of the period. Such as, Abbasid gold coins found in Bangladesh witness an early Arab Bengal trade relation. Surprisingly, several coin hoards have been discovered across districts of Bangladesh, namely, Dohar hoard and Chandpur hoard. They actually form part of our understanding of that region.

III. CONCLUSION

There are dividends galore and revelations aplenty from the study of coin hoards in Bangladesh. Coin hoards act as time capsules, preserving a tangible record of the economic history and political landscape of the region. They reveal some information about different ruling periods, from the Sultanate to the present period. The designs, symbols and inscriptions on coins speak about art, religion, and cultural identity of the time. They mostly include depictions of

significant figures, deities and other motifs that were important to society. Studying coin hoards encourage researchers to trace the historical economic conditions, trade practices, and monetary policies to get a better understanding of the changing trade routes and the goods that were valued. A coin hoard adds to the inventory of numismatic evidence enriching our knowledge of ancient civilizations in Bangladesh. Discoveries often lead to new archaeological sites as well as additional opportunities for research. Studies of these hoards make their contributions to numismatics and can yield data for academia, publications, and exhibitions beyond the confines of such sites. It helps to conserve all historical heritage. Display and study of coin hoards give opportunities to teach the public something about their own local history- heritage and thus create a sense of pride and curiosity. The study of these coins will enable scholars to unravel the history of rich and varied heritage that is Bangladesh, and provide great learning experiences for future generations.

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