



Pratipal Bhatia

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Research in some major
museums of India**

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Coin cabinets: Display and Research in some major museums of India *¹⁶⁴

Pratipal Bhatia

Department of History, University Of Delhi, India

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION:

1.1 The concept of money in the form of metallic coins, their manufacture, use as cash, savings, trade transactions, payment as salaries, money lending, treasure trove ownership etc., in other words different aspects of money management, were known to the people of the Indian sub-continent from about 5th-4th century BC onwards. This is evident from the contemporary literature,¹⁶⁶ extant coin-finds, inscriptions and sculptures.¹⁶⁷ Our people also had the concept of public viewing of art objects and transmitting their message through these objects to posterity, which we 'modernists' put in our museums. Thus, these art objects and art galleries described in literature as *chitrashalas*, among which should be included Ajanta caves, sculptures, and the temples/buildings documented by engraved epigraphs, did serve the purpose of museums though they were not termed as museums as is done now.¹⁶⁸

1.2 In modern times, the beginnings of museums in India are closely associated with the most prestigious of Indological scholarship, Sir William Jones' Asiatic Society of Bengal founded in Calcutta in 1784 under the patronage of Warren Hastings, the then Governor General of India. In fact, the construction of a building for the society was occasioned mainly by the need to set up a museum within it, as literature of all kinds recorded in manuscripts and inscriptions, monuments of art and architecture, history of the economy and money management as recorded in the archives of the old or in the coins of all kinds grew in volume. No doubt inspiration did come from the spirit of enquiry and thirst for knowledge about the East. The basic concern in those days was for collecting and not displaying and it continues to be in India even at the end of the millennium. The defining paradigm of such collections was 'unique' and 'peculiar' to India.

1.3 The popular image of the museum is expressed by the Hindustani word *Ajaibghar* or *Ajaibkhana* which was translated by Kipling as 'Wonder House',¹⁶⁹ where one can see and wonder. Sometimes it was referred to as *Jadugar* or house of magic. Currently the term used is *Sangrahalaya*, that is the house of treasures or house of collections.

1.4 The majority of the museums in India have had a close association with the Archaeological Survey of India. As a result they have strong archaeology sections and a coin collection is only one wing of that section. They specialise in collecting antiquities and treat coins as art objects or antiquities and not as money. So they have coins of ancient/medieval

periods but not modern currency notes, bank books, cheque books, hundis, money or financial documents, sale purchase deeds etc. in their collections not to speak of display. That the coins were treated as antiquities from early 19th century may be seen from the title *Essays on Indian Antiquities (Historic, Numismatic and Palaeographic)*, by James Prinsep and edited by Edward Thomas. Since the coins are treated as antiquities, museums began to compete in collecting 'best pieces' during their annual purchase and neglected the monetary aspect of the coins. If the coin did not look attractive by way of its metal content/portraiture, it did not/and does not find a place in museum cabinets. If such coins come as treasure trove finds or as gifts (free of charge) they are permitted to remain in the coin cabinets, otherwise their fate is a melting pot or a private collection from where it is difficult to retrieve it for scholarly endeavour for a very long time. Even numismatic scholarship is biased and scholars take pride in writing on and publishing gold coins which may have had limited circulation.¹⁷⁰ Thus the coins of baser metals such as billon or copper or bronze get step-motherly treatment. Hence the history of money, monetary patterns, matters related to money management and money museology remain a neglected field of study in India.

In any museum big or small a coin collection forms a major part of its total collection. But the space allotted for display of coins in a museum comprises only 2-3 show cases. Visually the coins do not attract attention of common visitors, being small in size they escape notice. Another reason for displaying only a few coins in a museum is the belief that numismatics is a specialised study and as such meant only for a few. Yet another reason of not displaying many coins is the problem of their security. Coins being very handy and small and having great metallic value are the most tempting among all other categories of museum objects and not all museums can take adequate steps to safeguard them. Study of numismatics has been neglected in the recent past in India and even in museums the subject is not given its due.

SECTION 2

INDIAN MUSEUM CALCUTTA

It was the Oriental Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal¹⁷¹ set up in 1814, which after a prolonged debate developed into the Indian Museum by the Indian Museum Act of 1866.¹⁷² Thus the first museum of colonial India was born under the patronage and financial support of the Government of India. It was conceived as a multipurpose museum and its management was left to a board of trustees.

The history of the coin cabinet of the Indian Museum is closely associated with the numismatic activities of the ASB on the one hand and the Archaeological Survey of India¹⁷³ on the other. The ASB received coins as gift presentations but the first numismatic acquisition was a set from the

cabinet of Col Mackenzie presented after his death in 1821. The early decades of the 19th century were dominated by the pioneering research / publication work done by Professor H. H. Wilson, James Prinsep and Dr. Roer. Their interest to begin with was in Roman, Bactrian Greek and Indo-Greek coins which later extended to Indo-Scythian and imperial Gupta coins. It is worth mentioning here that it was the study of bilingual coins by Prinsep which led to the decipherment of ancient alphabets of India. In 1844 all the intrinsically important coins of the ASB were stolen. In 1859 the purchase of Stacy's collection made the cabinet of the ASB comparatively rich in ancient Indian coins. Since then the treasure trove coins presented by various governments made the ASB cabinet rich and this was supplemented by gifts given by private individuals.

The first date of accession of coins in the IM Accession Registers is June 19, 1876. Six copper coins found in the Singhbhum district formed the nucleus of the collection. The establishment of the ASI, and the appointment of General A. Cunningham, the pioneer explorer and the first Archaeological Surveyor to the Government of India, whose extensive tours and survey reports laid solid ground for numismatics researches. The IM gradually became the depository of material excavated by the ASI, specially the work which was done in eastern India. C.R. Rodgers prepared a *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Parts I-IV* which was printed in Calcutta, 1893-94. It is a rough list rather than a scientific catalogue.

In 1903 the ASB expressed its inability to manage the coin cabinet and requested that its coins be shifted to the IM. The coins were received by the IM in 1904 on permanent loan basis. Henceforth the cabinet of the IM included the collections of both the institutions. It has a fairly large collection of about 50,000 coins¹⁷⁴ of which nearly 3000 are gold coins.¹⁷⁵ It has about 26,833 archaeological objects.¹⁷⁶ Thus coins form the largest collection of a single type of antiquity. The IM coin collection is a fairly good representative of the history of Indian money from early times to modern times.

By the first decade of the 20th century, the archaeological section of the IM was foremost and secured its discrete professional status within the IM and Numismatics was, and continues to be a part of this section. It is the Keeper of Archaeology who has the overall charge of the coin cabinet. He is assisted by one or two Numismatic Officers and two Technical Assistants.

In terms of publication and research the IM has done much better as compared to other museums in the country. Four catalogues of the coins of the IM have been published¹⁷⁷ in which nearly 13,364 coins have been discussed.¹⁷⁸ Three supplementary coin catalogues have also been published¹⁷⁹ and the last in the series is *The Gold in India* in which the

author has published 214 coins.¹⁸⁰ However, what is published and classified is less than 50% of the IM holdings. Besides its own publications, scholars/researchers have used its holdings for their books, research papers and Ph.D. dissertations. The IM has a very good library and the ASB library is nearby.

However, there is no research room or students' room for studying coins. Most of the scholars have to work on the table of the Numismatic Officer or of some other curatorial staff which is irritating to both of them. The staff therefore are reluctant to show the material because this means they have to sit with the scholar and they then cannot do anything else.

The coins are kept in wooden trays which are kept in the strong room or vaults. Only a few showcases are put in the coin gallery which is alright for general visitors, but for specialists facilities need to improve. There is a conservation laboratory and their Photo Section is very good though getting a photograph from the IM is an extremely difficult task.

STATE MUSEUM, LUCKNOW

This (hereafter described as SML), is the oldest museum in the State of Uttar Pradesh. It was established in 1863¹⁸¹ at the initiative of Col. Abbott, the then commissioner of Lucknow Division. In its early days it functioned as a municipal institution and was located in the Chhoti Chhatar Manzil from where it was shifted to Lal Baradari, Coronation Hall of the Nawabs of Awadh, in 1884. In that year it was declared a Provincial Museum. Since 1950, it has come to be known as the State Museum, Lucknow. Owing to the rapid growth in its collections it was felt necessary to shift it from Lal Baradari to the newly constructed museum building at Banarasi Bagh which was inaugurated in May 1963, where it is located inside the zoo complex. It is a very well attended museum if one were to go by the number of visitors to the museum every day. Dr. A.A. Fuhrer was appointed as the first Curator of the SML on March 30, 1885. He was a well known archaeologist. Since then a galaxy of scholars, archaeologists, numismatists and historians have been associated with the SML in different capacities, namely R.D.Banarji, Pandit Hiranand Shastri, Dr. V.S. Agrawal, Dr. Bhagwat Sharan and Prof. K.D.Bajpai.

Uttar Pradesh is virtually the heart of northern India in which traders, moneyers, pilgrims, monks, armies, and royalty have moved with bags of money since the advent of coins on the sub-continent. The majority of the SML coin collection is formed by coins which were received through treasure trove finds under the Treasure Trove Act of 1878. Between 1882 and 1980 as many as 1,145 coin hoards were reported from Uttar Pradesh¹⁸² that is roughly 11 hoards per year or one hoard per month. Acquisition of a hoard is a matter of administrative routine but its examination, study, report and disposal often take a long time.

The SML coin collection which is based primarily on coin hoards is the true mirror of north Indian money from early times to the contemporary period. Prior to the appointment of the Coin Committee in 1898 the work of hoards was looked after by Dr. Fuhrer. Later the Coin Committee shouldered the entire burden of this work but it continued and still continues to function in the Museum, the Director being its ex-officio Secretary. Acquisition of hoards, their examination and distribution has been going on regularly but it is a great pity that the valuable information about the contents, study and disposal of the coin hoards remained buried in museum files. Eminent numismatists like Sir Richard Burn, E. W. Walsh, Durga Prasad, Prayag Dyal, Dr. V. S. Agarwal, C.R. Singhal, Dr. Pannalal and a host of other scholars noticed only the rare coin types in these hoards and published them in various research journals, but the comprehensive account of these hoards was first published by Dr. A. K. Shrivastva in his monograph *Coin Hoards of Uttar Pradesh*, 1980. No written records dealing with the treasure trove finds are available for the period prior to 1882 in Uttar Pradesh. The pity is that under a G.O. of 1878 the coin hoards that came to the museum were distributed among various museums in and outside India and the balance were/and are still being sold to the public at a very modest price. Since no detailed documentation or photographs of the distributed coins are kept in the SML a very important aspect of monetary history is lost to posterity. It is not possible for scholars to move from museum to museum in India and other countries to search for the coins of a particular hoard. This according to us has done a great academic damage.

This museum has over 100,000 antiquities. Of these 40,824 are coins, 258 are medals and 518 are seals.¹⁸³ Thus here too coins alone form the largest single type of antiquity. The numismatic section of the museum is looked after by two Numismatic Officers and one Assistant. There is a coin gallery in which some coins and coin replicas are on display. Exhibitions on coins are organised but not very frequently. The museum organised an exhibition of medals which was a great success.

The new acquisitions made every year are photographed but not displayed. Lists of new coin acquisitions are published off and on. All the coins are not classified or put on trays. In fact I have not seen any trays with coins laid on them. The coins are put in small paper envelopes and they are mostly arranged according to the year of their entry in the museum and sometimes according to dynasty/date. Many of them are sitting in cloth or polythene bags. However the staff is very meticulous about the quantity of the coins held in their custody.

A few catalogues of the coins of the Indo-Greek rulers, Parthians, Kushanas, Mughals, Nawabs of Awadh etc. have been published but a lot needs to be done. We are preparing a monograph on Indo-Sasanian coins and their Derivatives: a study based on coin hoards found in Uttar Pradesh

and its neighbouring areas. A biennial research Bulletin of the Museums and Archaeology of U.P. is published under the editorship of the Director.

The museum has a small laboratory with regular staff that helps in the work of conservation. There is a Photo Section which has a Chief Photographer and his assistant. They do not have up to date facilities and work with old manual cameras/equipment. The museum has a big hall where scholars are allowed to sit and do their work under the supervision of a staff member.

Personally I think SML is the best place to house a money museum in northern India. The museum has the material required for a money museum and also space can be made available either in its present building or it can be acquired at another place. Lucknow itself is centrally located, well connected by train/air etc. There are several other museums in U.P. such as the famous Government Museum, Mathura, and their material too can be acquired on permanent/temporary loan basis. There can be a research/archives/library wing attached to the money museum and thus it may provide facilities to the scholars, old and young, for their work. It becomes difficult for scholars to work if they have to depend on staff who are doing different types of routine duties.

COIN CABINET OF THE DIRECTORATE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND MUSEUMS, RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR

This museum (hereafter referred to as JM) was founded by His Highness Maharaja Swai Madhosinhaji and was formally inaugurated by Sir Edward Bradford in 1887. The building of the museum, which stands in the Ram Niwas Gardens, is itself a fine piece of architecture.¹⁸⁴

Civilization in Rajasthan is of high antiquity. Sporadic excavation work was carried out on several sites in Rajasthan and special attention is drawn to Bikaner, Udaipur, Bairat, Rairh, Sambhar and Nagari. All these sites yielded large quantities of ancient and early medieval/medieval coins. Rajasthan is extremely rich in coin-hoard finds and because of its desert-like soil and dry climate these coins have been well preserved. A number of hoards were found, reported and published in the 19th century. Most of such material went to the treasuries of different princely states and some went to the coin cabinet of the Asiatic Society, Bombay. In 1961 the Home Department of the Government of Rajasthan circulated the Treasure Trove Act of 1878. Under this Act the coin hoards began to be acquired by the government museums specially the JM. Some of the largest hoards of Punch-marked coins, Gupta gold coins (the famous Bayana hoard of 1,821 Gupta gold coins was found in Bayana, Bharatpur); of ancient republics like the Malavas; Kushana gold and copper coins; Indo-Sasanian coins (a total of about 100,000 coins are reported); Gadhiya coins (a single hoard from Kasindra, in Sirohi District yielded 94,131 coins along with two copper containers); Bull/Horseman coins,

seated Goddess type coins; coins of the Arab Governors of Sindh and Mansura, coins of Sultans of Delhi, Mughal Emperors of Delhi, those of the British Government of India and of the princely states of Rajasthan have been found in large numbers as treasure troves, in excavations/explorations. All these or a major portion of the finds are in the JM. Our guess is that there may be over 250,000 coins in different metals which give a continuous history of Indian money from the 4th century BC to present times, and medals of different states, seals etc. in this collection. At present Rajasthan has many museums at Ajmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota, Alwar, Bharatpur, and all of them have their own coin cabinets.

The numismatic material of JM has not been properly sorted. In a large museum like that of JM there is a Numismatic Officer and some subordinate staff but they have not prepared a catalogue or a list of coins for the consultation of the scholars. Some very good articles have been published by the staff members of the Directorate¹⁸⁵ and they do publish a journal entitled *The Researcher*. A good deal of Rajasthan numismatic material is seen in the trade and markets.

The strong room of the JM is located in the basement which is full of dampness and that is very harmful to the old coins. Sometimes, during monsoons this cellar gets flooded due to water logging. Large quantities of coins are still bundled up in cloth bags, ordinary paper bags/envelopes or in polythene bags or cardboard boxes. They are not put on trays and they are not classified. The museum Accession Register is not available to scholars.

In spite of such a rich coin collection there is no proper coin gallery or a research room where *bona fide* scholars could sit and do their research. Some coins and coin photographs are displayed in Hawa Mahal, but by no means can it be described as a money museum.

This museum has a conservation laboratory where the coins are treated. It seems their equipment and methodology are rather primitive. The coins after treatment get disfigured or the upper layer of the coin gets peeled off. There is a Photographer but he works with a rotten old rickety camera and sits in a small window to take pictures.

A very sketchy account giving extremely inadequate information of coins/coin hoards of JM entitled *Coins and Coin-Hoards of Rajasthan* was published by Smt. P. Pokharna in 1997. It gives us some relief that at least there is something to see in print of such a magnificent coin collection of the magnificent state of Rajasthan - the home of the famous Marwari business community of India.

There is plenty of material available and there exists a strong nucleus to establish a money museum in Rajasthan and this could develop into a great centre of research/ studies.

NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

Hereafter referred to as NM. Proposals were put forth as early as 1912-13 for the establishment of a national museum at Delhi. The question of the formation of a national museum of India had been sporadically receiving the attention of the Government of India for a long time. The first effective step towards the establishment of such a museum was taken in 1945 when on the initiative of Sir Mortimer Wheeler a committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Maurice Gwyer, former Chief Justice of India and the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Delhi, was set up to report on the functions, administration, organisation etc. of the proposed museum. This committee submitted its report in 1946 and from then to 1949 when the museum was inaugurated Mortimer Wheeler and his successors vigorously pursued the matter so that it was not shelved again.¹⁸⁶ An exhibition of Indian Art was held in London during the winter months of 1947-48. On its return it was decided to display this collection in the Rashtrapati Bhawan at Delhi and it was a great success. The Government of India felt the need to retain the exhibition at Delhi to form the holdings of the National Museum. Some states agreed and others did not. What was left behind formed the nucleus of the National Museum which was shifted to its present premises in 1960.¹⁸⁷

The coin collection of the NM comprises about 120,000 coins of gold, silver, copper and alloys. These coins were acquired as gifts, purchases and through Government agencies such as ASI and Customs when the coins are confiscated from persons trying to smuggle the items out of India. The Museum has acquired some important private collections such as the Paruck Collection of Sasanian coins; part of the Bayana hoard (618 coins) of Gupta gold coins along with the container in which these gold coins were deposited at Bayana; part of the Hauz Khas (New Delhi) hoard of copper and billon coins described as the token currency (44,000 out of 82,000 coins found) of the time of Muhammad-bin- Tughlak; the gift of the Deshikachari collection of 7,000 coins comprising primarily south Indian coins which includes a sizable number of gold Pagodas and Phanams; other gifts from ASI and different states as part of treasure trove distribution. Besides these the museum has acquired the Vyas Collection (ancient and medieval Indian coins), the Jhalan Collection – primarily ancient coins and south Indian coins, and the Sisodia collection – primarily of gold Phanams.

The NM has some very fine pieces of Delhi Sultans and the Mughal Emperors. Out of these 204 coins are on display in the coin gallery in four show cases which gives the history/evolution of Indian coinage from 5th-4th century BC to the end of the 19th century.

The location of the coin room including the vault is not too happy. It is very close to the entrance and there is lot of disturbance. There are three staff members, the Keeper of Coins, Epigraphy and in-charge of jewellery, all under one officer, who is assisted by two Curatorial Associates and one Attendant.

There is no students' room. The staff are extremely reluctant to show coins to fellow researcher citizens/scholars/students but are fairly cordial to visitors from abroad. Very often we get information about some coins of the NM collection through these visiting scholars. Scholars wishing to study/do research on coins have to sit in the Keeper's office and work on the small table of the Keeper and do their work if they are lucky to get an opportunity to do so. Under the circumstances research is almost at zero level. The NM has published B. Ch. Chhabra's *Catalogue of Gupta Gold Coins*, 1980; R. Vanaja's *Indian Coinage*, 1990 in which photographs of some coins of the NM collection are included. The present author prepared a catalogue of 203 Roman silver coins which was submitted for publication to IIRNS, Anjaneri, Nashik in 1994. The present Keeper is preparing a catalogue of Punchmarked coins of the Bharwani hoard for publication. Professor B.N. Mukherji is using the material of the NM coin collection for his book on the Numismatic Art of India.

The NM is now deemed to be a university and have its own teaching staff. They offer their own diplomas, degrees and conduct courses in museology. The museum does have a Conservation laboratory and a good Photo Section, but the Photographers are always complaining of being over worked. The NM has a fairly good library which being air-conditioned is popular with students/scholars.

As all the museums under discussions are part of archaeological museums they do not have currency notes or any other material related to paper money. So the general impression the public have is that money museum means coin cabinet and those who wish to study the history of money, mints, currency notes, banking etc. go to other institutions.

SECTION 3

3.1 In contrast to these museums some private collectors have fabulous collections of paper money, bank notes, hundis, old cheques, drafts issued by different banks, stamp papers on which mortgage deeds are written etc. These private collectors are liberal and cooperative and at their own cost organise exhibitions for the public in general and for students, especially school children, on specific demand.

3.2 Almost all the leading banks have their history cells, archives and also written histories. Among these we are informed Grindlay's Bank has a very

rich collection which could become part of a money museum. The case is similar with the State Bank of India. On enquiry we were informed that there is nothing on display.

3.3 The Reserve Bank of India was established on April 1, 1935 on the pattern of the central banks in the advanced countries at that time. The preamble to the RBI Act sets out the objectives of the Bank as: to regulate the issue of Bank notes and the keeping of reserves with a view to securing monetary stability in India, and generally to operate the currency and the credit system of the country to its advantage.¹⁸⁸ Thus the RBI is the sole authority for the issue of currency in India. Although one rupee coins/notes and subsidiary coins the magnitude of which is relatively small, are issued by the Government of India, they are put into circulation only through the RBI. Coins are not the liability of the RBI. It is heartening to know that recently the RBI has undertaken to set up an RBI Monetary Museum in Mumbai. We have the following information about the proposed museum:

- The issue of setting up a Monetary Museum in Mumbai by the Reserve Bank of India has been on the anvil for quite some time. Concrete steps in the matter, however, were taken in 1996 under the initiative of the then Governor, Dr. C. Rangarajan. Accordingly a concept paper was put in April, 1996, on the basis of which the Theme Paper was submitted.
- The objective of the Museum would be to preserve and present to the public the monetary heritage of India. The aim will be to trace the evolution of Money and Banking in India from ancient times to the present. The Museum will be dedicated to the Nation.

The objects displayed would essentially be representative pertaining to major Indian dynasties from the Ancient period onwards to date. Most exhibits displayed in the proposed museum would be original. However, in case of extremely rare objects, replicas may be displayed or alternate methods used.

A research cell facility for scholars was envisaged in the original proposal. In the presently identified premises, it may not be possible to have a separate research cell for scholars.

The Museum will have three galleries *viz.* Coinage, Paper Currency and Financial Miscellany. Coinage would cover Indian coins from Ancient times to the present. The Paper Currency gallery would cover the period from the late eighteenth century to the present, with an emphasis on the post 1935 period. The Miscellany module would cover facets of indigenous banking, hundis, as well as other financial instruments.

The Museum would be designed by professionals, who would design the interiors taking into account all aspects of museology.

The material (exhibits) available with RBI would be displayed in the Museum along with those procured from the markets as well as donations received from different sources.

Due to lack of space there will be no separate library for scholars.

The Museum, initially, will be housed in an area earmarked for this purpose within the Bank's premises.

The Museum will organise thematic exhibitions on a quarterly basis.¹⁸⁹

COMMENTS

The coin cabinets of our museums serve the purpose of acquisition, conservation/preservation and safe custody of coins to some extent. In some Museums, coins are often dumped in some corner of the museum in sealed lockers, vaults or chests and in many cases in district treasury offices. Losing one coin (coins do get lost it is well known) if detected may result in the loss of their job by a staff member. Hence the staff are sensitive and are reluctant to answer any questions regarding their collections. Documentation, card indexes or photographs of coins are not available to students/scholars. The new acquisitions are not even reported by the NM. This was done earlier even by very small museums in their yearly bulletins. Occasionally we get some information from some bulletins such as those of SML and JM. Our museums do have Acquisition Registers but the same are not made available to scholars. No viewing of new acquisitions is done, so the public in general and scholars in particular are not aware of what is going on in the museums located in the cities where they live. As young students of universities, who have offered numismatics as one of their subjects of specialisation, are not allowed to see coins frequently their training remains incomplete and their interest is not allowed to grow. This is responsible for the lack of good, trained, knowledgeable numismatists in our museums. We in the universities hesitate to encourage students to do research on topics related to monetary history knowing the difficulties which they will have to face in getting access to basic source material. It is the failure of the system and not scholarship (the majority of our young students are bright and devoted), which is responsible for the apathy towards the subject and therefore the subject is suffering.

ENDNOTES

* Additional Note

From 1999 to 2011, a number of changes have taken place in the numismatic sections of the museums discussed in the above paper.

1. My information is that the SML has stopped selling treasure trove coins. A number of treasure troves were received by the SML in the first decade of the 21st century which has enriched its coin cabinet. Its latest acquisition, that I am aware of, is a huge hoard of several thousand Maldives-type Cowrie shells found on 24 January 2009, buried in a large sized earthen pot in a very small village named Sarai Mir, Tehsil Hydergarh, District Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh. On my request, these Cowrie shells are being treated and counted in the conservation section of the SML. I plan to write a paper on these Cowrie shells. Recently a Numismatic Officer has been appointed.

2. The Directorate of Archaeology and Museums of Rajasthan engaged a private company to digitise all the numismatic material of all the museums of Rajasthan and the same has been put online. This online version can be viewed and used by everybody all over the world. The example of Rajasthan is followed by Allahabad Museum, Allahabad and the Archaeological Survey of India in New Delhi.

3. The coin gallery of the National Museum, New Delhi, was organized by professionals. Its coin display traces the evolution and history of Indian coinage from 5th-4th century BCE to the end of the nineteenth century CE. This is highly appreciated by the public.

The NM has prepared a CD of images along with some other details of some representative but good coins from its collection. This CD is available on sale.

In 2008 the Keeper of the coins died in an accident. Since then there has been no Keeper of coins and the coin room is closed. This means no study and no research work. The NM itself has had no regularly appointed Director for the last many years.

4. It gives me great pleasure to inform that the Reserve Bank of India has set up a Monetary Museum in Mumbai, and the same was inaugurated on 18 November 2004 by Dr. AJP Abdul Kalam, the then President of India. The museum is dedicated to the people of India. The aim of the RBI Monetary Museum is to preserve and present to the public the monetary heritage of India.

The Museum has three galleries *viz.* Coinage, Paper Currency and Financial Miscellany. The coin gallery covers Indian coins from ancient times to the present.

The RBI has its Archives (RBIA located at Pune). RBIA functions under the control of History Cell, Department of Economic and Policy Research. RBIA has its own museum (RBIAM) which was inaugurated on 01 June 2010. In this museum archival documents and photographs giving the history and evolution of the RBI from 1935-2010 are exhibited. University teachers, post-graduate and Ph.D. students, researchers and RBI staff can use the RBIA and its museum for their research work at Pune, not far from Mumbai.

¹⁶⁴ See map of Indian subcontinent.

N.B. Note 165 is missing from the original text.

¹⁶⁶ Panini, *Ashtadhyayi*, V- 2:110; R. P. Kangle, *Kautiliya Arthashastra*, Part I, reprinted by Motilal Banarasidas, (Delhi 1986), pp.108-09, 2.12. 24-27; Part II, repr. Delhi 1986, p. 57, 2.12. 23-24; Part III, repr. Delhi 1986, p. 181; Quintus Curtius, *Vit. Alex.* viii. 12, 42, cited by John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, London 1936, p. XIV; *Jetavana Jataka*.

¹⁶⁷ A. Cunningham, *The Stupa of Bharhut*, Second Edition (Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1962), pl. LVII; A. Cunningham, *Mahabodhi or the Great Buddhist Temple at Bodh Gaya*, (London, 1892, reprinted by Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1961), Pl. VIII: 8; P. K. Agrawal, 'The depiction of Punch-marked coins in early Indian art', *JNSI*, 27, Varanasi, 1965, plates VII-XI; Amol N. Bankar, 'Depiction of Punch-marked coins in Early Indian Art: the case of Litta Jataka at Bharhut', *Gullak* Issue 6, Mumbai, 01 June 2010, pp. 2-3; *Ibid*, Issue 7, 01 July 2010, Mumbai, pp. 3-5.

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- ¹⁶⁸ N. R. Banerjee, *Museums and the Cultural Heritage of India*, (Delhi, 1990), pp. 13-14
- ¹⁶⁹ Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*, (London, 1899), p. 1
- ¹⁷⁰ B. Ch. Chhabra, *Catalogue of the Gupta Gold Coins*, Delhi, 1986; B. N. Mukherjee, *The Indian Gold Coins in the Indian Museum*, Kolkata, 1990; the ex-Keeper of Numismatics in the NM, has been busy collecting data and photographs of all the gold coins in the NM, for a proposed catalogue.
- ¹⁷¹ Hereafter referred to as the ASB.
- ¹⁷² *Ancient India*, no. 9, 1953, New Delhi, pp. 233-35
- ¹⁷³ Hereafter referred to as the ASI.
- ¹⁷⁴ I convey my thanks to the Director of the Indian Museum, Kolkata and his colleague Dr. Chhanda Mookherjee, who supplied me with this information over the telephone.
- ¹⁷⁵ B. N. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 37
- ¹⁷⁶ I convey my thanks to Dr. S. K. Chakravarty who was then the Director of the Indian Museum, and his colleague Mr. S. Ganguly who, at short notice, supplied me with this information over the telephone.
- ¹⁷⁷ The authorities of the IM approached V. A. Smith in 1904 to prepare a catalogue of ancient Indian coins. After a long correspondence and bargaining over honorarium starting on 15 February 1904 that ended on 13 July 1904, it was agreed that a sum of Rs. 10,000.00 would be spent on the preparation of a catalogue of ancient Indian coins (National Archives Files -Archaeology and Epigraphy- A, 1904, Nos. 4-8). V. A. Smith catalogued 3000 coins out of 5000 coins sent to him. He found the balance of coins not worthy of publication as their condition was too bad. Thus *A Catalogue of Coins of Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Vol. I, was published, Oxford 1906. This was followed by H.N. Wright, *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, Calcutta, Vol. II, Oxford 1907; Vol. III, pts I and II, Oxford 1908; and John Allan (ed.), *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Vol. IV, Oxford 1928.
- ¹⁷⁸ Mr R. D. Bhatt calculated the number of published coins in the four catalogues. I convey my thanks to him.
- ¹⁷⁹ Supplementary catalogues were published later. B. B. Bidyabinod, *Supplementary Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, Non-Muhammadan Series, Vol. I, (Calcutta, 1923); Shams-ud-din Ahmad, *A Supplement to Volume II of the Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum, Calcutta*, (Delhi, 1939); S. P. Basu, *The Second Supplementary Catalogue of Coins to Volume I*, (Calcutta, 1977). These catalogues do not carry images of coins. The latest catalogue is B.N. Mukherjee, see above note 170.
- ¹⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁸¹ *Ancient India*, no. 9, 1953, p. 234
- ¹⁸² A. K. Shrivastava, *Coin Hoards of Uttar Pradesh*, (Lucknow, 1980), Foreword by N.P. Joshi
- ¹⁸³ This very important piece of information has been very kindly supplied to us by Dr S.D. Trivedi, Retired Director of the SML. I am grateful to him for this kind gesture. According to the latest estimates however the SML has about 125, 000 coins in its collection. It seems that, like the Indian Museum Kolkata, coins alone form the largest single type of antiquities in the SML.
- ¹⁸⁴ Satya Prakash, *Round the Museum*, Jaipur, 1951, pp. 1-10
- ¹⁸⁵ Among these scholars one may name R. C. Agrawal, Satya Prakash, B.M.S. Parmar, Vijayakumar and P.L. Pokharna.
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ancient India*, no. 9, New Delhi, 1953, p. 44
- ¹⁸⁷ Leigh Ashton (ed), *The Art of India and Pakistan, a Commemorative Catalogue of the exhibition held at The Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1947-48*, (Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1949), Preface. *A Guide to the National Museum*, (New Delhi, 1997), pp.1-2; Anil Goyal, *Museums and Collections of Delhi*,(Delhi 1998), pp. 1-2
- ¹⁸⁸ RBI – Brochure, *Functions and Working* – <http://www.rbi.org.in/currency/museum/m-hundi.ht>
- ¹⁸⁹ I am grateful to Shri Bazil Sheikh, the then Deputy General Manager, RBI, Mumbai, for sending this information. He was actively involved in the project of the Monetary Museum of the RBI, and we corresponded frequently.