



## NEWSLETTER

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## ORIENTAL NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

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countries. The collection also has a good representation of coins of Georgia struck in the 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, and copper coins struck in the Caucasus states during the 17-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, e.g. Darband, Shemakhi.

The inclusion of some 72 eastern European imitations of Abbasid and Samanid dirhems forms the basis of an important section by Gert Rispling where he attempts, by means of hoard evidence and die studies, to group such issues chronologically and geographically.

The book starts with a short history of Islamic numismatics and then a history of the collection. A chapter entitled "Einleitung" (introduction) is devoted mainly to a brief history of the Golden Horde, their coin issues, and a listing of the mint-places with comments and references elsewhere in the literature. There then follows a 7-page bibliography and several pages of cartouches found on the coins of the Golden Horde and other issues. The purpose of the latter is not clear as it is not referenced to anything else in the book, and the numbering is somewhat obscure.

Next comes the main catalogue, covering 1398 coins. This is devised on a geographical basis in four sections, and then by mint within each of the sections. The four sections are:

i. The Volga region from Kazan to Astrakhan (824 coins, including the issues from major mints like Bulghar, Saray, Saray al-Jadida, Gulistan)

ii. The northern Black Sea region (140 coins, including Qrim)

iii. Armenia and Georgia, as currently constituted (278 coins)

iv. Northern Azerbaijan and Darband (156 coins).

The overall format will be familiar to anyone owning any of the volumes of the recent Tübingen sylloge. All coins are described on one page and clearly illustrated on the facing page. Coin types are numbered consecutively in bold type, and individual coins in normal type. The language throughout is, of course, German, and the transliteration system of names and place-names is the normal German one, which can take some getting used to for those accustomed to the various English transliteration systems. Each transliterated mint-name is accompanied by its Arabic form, which should help. Each coin is appropriately described, with die-axis, and referenced to other published examples. One can argue the pros and cons of organising a work like this by mints rather than by issuing states/dynasties/authorities etc but, of its type, this work is exemplary. Moreover, the A4 format is more convenient than the rather unwieldy format of the Tübingen volumes.

The main catalogue section is followed by the 36 page chapter on eastern European imitations of Islamic coins. This begins with an introductory section where Gert Rispling explains his methodology and basis for grouping the various types of imitation coins into time slots and to possible issuers, e.g. Khazars, Volga Bulgars and others. The 72 coins in the Jena collection are then described in detail, with appropriate comment and comprehensive references. After this comes a listing of 314 hoards of Islamic coins found in Europe, with the percentage of imitation coins noted for each. The heading for this section "Funde islamischer Nachahmungen" is somewhat misleading as a number of the hoards listed do not contain any imitations. A bibliography of over 4 pages is provided for this section.

The book ends with a concordance of the numbers used for the coins in the sylloge with collection inventory numbers and sources.

All in all, the authors and publishers are to be congratulated on this excellent work, which is essential reading for anyone interested in the coins of the region covered, and in the coins of the Golden Horde and European imitations of Islamic coins in particular.

SLG

*Orientalisches Münzkabinett Jena 1: Sylloge der Münzen des Kaukasus und Osteuropas [Oriental Coin Cabinet Jena 1: Sylloge of the coins of the Caucasus and Eastern Europa]*, by Tobias Mayer with contributions from Stefan Heidemann and Gert Rispling, published by Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, Germany, 2005; ISSN 1613-9682, ISBN 3-447-04893-X; A4 format, soft covers, 243 pages, illustrated throughout; price in the region of 70 Euros.

This excellent publication, dedicated to the memory of Johann Gustav Stickel, contains a significant portion of the Jena collection. Stefan Heidemann has already provided some information about this collection in ONS 147 and 157. Suffice it to say here that it was founded in 1840 as the Grossherzogliche Orientalische Münzkabinett and by 1906 had some 14000 items, making it a very significant collection of oriental coins for the period. As a result of the vicissitudes of war, however, the collection suffered greatly, being moved on several occasions; coins were lost or removed, the trays and cabinets upended with the result that coins and labels became disassociated; and the whole collection being stored in unsatisfactory conditions. By 1994 there were only 8950 coins left in the collection with little if any documentation. Fortunately, steps were then taken to rectify matters: a suitable location for the collection was found, work was undertaken to sort and catalogue the coins, and, by means of donations, the collection was expanded to contain around 15000 specimens.

The present volume covers the coins in the collection struck in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe. It is particularly strong in coins of the Golden Horde, and the collection, with some 900 coins of this series, is the most comprehensive outside the source