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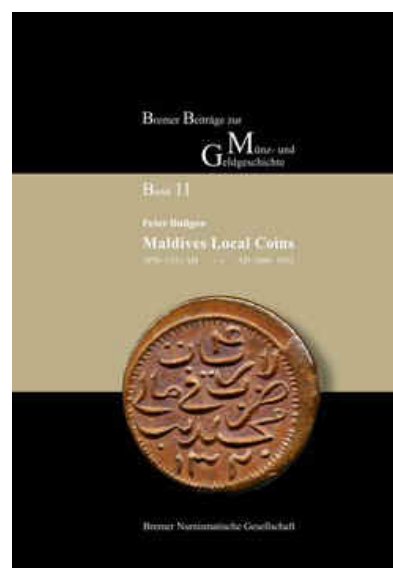
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Bremer Numismatische Gesellschaft e. V.
Parkallee 42
28209 Bremen
Germany

www.bng-bremen.de
[info\(at\)bng-bremen.de](mailto:info(at)bng-bremen.de)



Maldives Local Coins 1070 - 1331 AH / AD 1660 - 1913

by Peter Budgen

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Abstract

This publication attempts to develop a historical review of the coinage that has been locally produced in Maldives during the Sultanate period, starting from the early elusive issues of 1070 AH / AD 1659 and ending with the first coins struck for Maldives in Birmingham in the United Kingdom in 1331 AH / AD 1912.

The book starts with a short introduction to the sources on Maldivian history and numismatics, proceeds with a short account of the history and the means of payment used to facilitate the trade in the Maldivian Archipelago, leading to the description of various aspects of the locally produced coinage, including production methods and alloys, meaning of the inscriptions found on the coins, and a detailed catalogue of the coin issues.

Building on earlier research on the topic, for the first time in Maldivian numismatic history this work presents a comprehensive description of local coin issues with extensive die analysis, illustrates the majority of known coin varieties including a number of extremely rare and unique specimens from various sources, including major museum collections, and provides an in-depth metallurgical analysis of the coin alloys.

Unique features

- Bibliographical review of sources on Maldivian numismatics, including specialised publications of limited availability that are not widely known even to an advanced reader;
- Die analysis of all known locally struck issues of Maldivian coinage from 1070 AH / AD 1659 to 1331 AH / AD 1912, including clear black-and-white drawings and colour photographs of most types and varieties;
- Chemical analysis of over 200 specimens of locally struck Maldivian coins, including the analysis of the surface by Energy Dispersive X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy and bulk analysis by Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectroscopy.

Authors and contributors

The author of the book, Peter Budgen (p.budgen@btinternet.com), has researched the native coinage of the Maldives for over forty years. He has published several articles on Maldivian coins in the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society in 2011. This book represents the ultimate results of his research in this area.

The author was actively assisted by Vasilijs Mihailovs, MPhil Asian Studies, the author of “Siamese Coins: From Funan to The Fifth Reign” book (in collaboration with Ronachai Krisadaolarn, River Books, Bangkok, 2012), before his unfortunate death in 2015. “Siamese Coins” has received the book excellence prizes by the International Association of Professional Numismatists (IAPN) and by the Professional Numismatists Guild (PNG), becoming the first book on coins of the Far East to receive the book excellence prize in the history of both bodies.

Sample Pages

Bremer Beiträge
zur
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Peter Budgen

Maldives Local Coins

1070–1331 AH AD 1660–1913

Bremer Numismatische Gesellschaft

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Mohammad al-Hajji

1104-1112 AH ▪ (AD 1692-1701)

Name on coins: *Mohammad al-Hajji bin Ali* (on AH 1105 ½ Larins) / محمد الحاج بن علي

Background

Following Sultan Sa'id Mohammad's sudden and unexpected death, there was a short period of searching by Ministers and the inhabitants of Malé for a successor. The first Minister to be approached was unwilling to accept the honour and left the country the same day. The only Qázi (Judge) in office at the time was Mohammad al-Hajji, who was then considered the most suitable candidate. He was proclaimed Sultan, and soon consolidated his position by marrying Mariyam Kabá, the widow now of the two previous Sultans. Despite being second choice for Sultan, Mohammad was a just and kind ruler. He died after a reign of only 8½ years.

Coinage

During the early part of Mohammad's reign just two coins were struck, a larin in 1104 AH, and the first kuda larin the following year. Both of these coins are very rare.

It was probably during Mohammad al-Hajji's reign that the main causes of the rapid debasement of the silver coinage began. He started distributing money from the Treasury, partly on training for scholars, but also on certain annual religious days to ordinary citizens. These distributions were in the form of gold coins and silver larins. Many old mosques were restored and new mosques were built, as well as taxation being greatly reduced. The supply of silver for any new coinage was therefore considerably reduced, necessitating the debasement of newly struck coins.

Unit	No.	Date (AH)	Rarity	Weight range (g)	KM#	TJB	Notes
<i>Larin</i>	7	1104	VR	4.82-4.83 (2)	10	8	
	NC 1	1108		No specimens known		10	1
<i>½ Larin</i>	8	1105	VR	2.32-2.34 (2)	9	9	

Notes

1 This coin is listed and illustrated in Allan. Bell lists this coin, but does not illustrate it and just refers to Allan's article. Browder also lists it, quoting Allan, but points out that the date is doubted as Allan's coin photograph only shows part of the last number in the date. Browder also notes that he has a coin dated 1104 that appears to be of the same die type as Allan's coin. This specimen is now in my own collection. Comparing that coin to Allan's coin picture I am certain they are from the same pair of dies. Having now seen the Fitzwilliam Museum's collection of Maldivian coins I have realised that Allan's coin is their specimen. Only a very small portion of the last figure in the date is present on the coin, and it is understandable why it could have been interpreted as a figure 8.

Sample Pags

No. 8

1105 AH (AD 1693)

½ Larin

Obverse 1



الحاج	Al-Hajji
بن	son of
علي	Ali

Type 1a: Border style 2, solid line

Known dies: 1

Reverse A



السلطان	The Sultan
١١٠٥	1105
سنة	year
محمد	Mohammad

Type Aa: Border style 4, solid line and round beads

Known dies: 1

Notes

- Only three specimens of this coin are known, two of which have been published. The coin shown above is the one illustrated in Browder, but is now in the author's collection. Another specimen is listed in Bell on Page 79, and illustrated at Plate Q, No.10. The coin is listed in KM, but is only illustrated with the drawing that features in Browder. The same drawing is used erroneously to illustrate the ½ larins of 1129 and 1131. The third known specimen is also in the author's collection, but is in a poorer condition than the one illustrated above and has a plug of silver inserted into the obverse.
- All coins of this series have the Cut-1 type of flan and the die alignment is ↑↑ or ↑↓.