

Look at the Coins!



Look at the Coins!

Essays in Honour of Joe Cribb
on his 75th Birthday

Edited by
Helen Wang and Robert Bracey

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Stephen SACK is an American artist residing in Brussels since 1977 (stephensack.com). He uses photography to create an archaeological fantasy of magical images, including 13 coin-based series, photographing worn, destroyed and corroded coins searching to reveal their symbolic mysteries. Exhibitions of coin photography: Center of Fine-Arts, Brussels (1985), British Museum (1999), Gallery Ariel Meyerowitz, New York (2004), Chester Roman Fort Museum (2014), Museum August Kestner, Hanover (2015), Museum of Art and History, Brussels (2015), Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden (2016), Coin Cabinet, Brussels (2020). Author of *Another Way of Looking at Coins: Numismatic Dreams and Alchemy* (2020), *Rêveries antiques* (2021), *Creatures of the Black Sea* (2022), and *The Alchemy of Money*, seminar Harvard University 2023.

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A Newly Discovered Hoard from West Bengal (co-authored, 1995) and *Coin Hoards of the Bengal Sultans: 1205-1576 AD from West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam and Bangladesh* (2017). She has edited several books of which the latest is *Gold Coins in the Collection of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata* (2010). She has authored several research papers on different aspects of numismatics of the Bengal Sultans, Islamic architecture, and settlement archaeology of Medieval Bengal in national and international journals and books. She initiated the publication of the *Journal of Islamic History and Culture of India* in 2012.

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Look at the Coins!

This volume represents only a small sample of the people who Joe has worked with, taught, mentored, and supported through his career. The Covid pandemic from 2020 to 2022 limited the number of colleagues who could be invited and the subsequent illness of one of the editors prevented its timely delivery for Joe's 75th birthday. On the occasion of Joe's retirement from the British Museum in 2010,¹ twenty-two colleagues contributed to a volume of papers celebrating his work. Twenty-one colleagues who did not have an opportunity to contribute to that felicitation, some of whom have met Joe since 2010, have been able to show their appreciation of Joe's friendship, academic support, and intellectual encouragement in this volume. The papers are by specialists in their respective fields, and in the spirit of academic friendship, each offers something new and interesting for Joe to enjoy. Our first contributor, Dai Zhiqiang, sets the tone beautifully, presenting a range of good wishes through the ages, in the hope that Joe will continue to guide and inspire us for many years to come, and that we may continue to show our appreciation.

Since 2010 Joe has been extremely active. He has, as the list of publications below shows, continued to write at a prodigious rate. The list includes contributions on North India, Gandhara, Kashmir, Tibet, China, and Cambodia, many of them offering new insights or resolving long-standing problems. He has continued to give talks, and longer lectures, to members of numismatic societies, to the public, and to students.² He has also, less visibly, supported a network of colleagues through his regular correspondence on various electronic platforms. In 2021 Joe took up the position of Adjunct Professor of Numismatics in the School of History and Culture at Hebei Normal University. This has revived Joe's longstanding interest in Chinese numismatics, and this volume reflects that in the number of papers from Joe's

old and new friends and colleagues in China. Even more recently, Joe was elected Honorary Vice President of the Royal Numismatic Society in 2022, a welcome voice for Asian numismatics on the Society's council. He is also the Deputy General Secretary, and on the Editorial Board, of the Oriental Numismatic Society. In March 2023 in recognition of his contributions to Chinese numismatics Joe was awarded a honorary doctorate by Hebei Normal University.



Figure 2. A gift of biscuits from Wannaporn Rienjang to celebrate Joe's honorary doctorate, featuring Joe in graduation gown, congratulations and a Kushan coin showing Kanisha I (made by @theshowroom168)

¹ Bhandare, S. and Garg, S. (2011) *Felicitas: Essays in Numismatics, Epigraphy and History in Honour of Joe Cribb*, Reesha Books, Mumbai. The fourth volume of *Gandhāran Studies*, edited by Nasim Khan, was also dedicated to Joe and featured contributions from eight authors, three of whom have contributed to this volume.

² The world changes. Joe has contributed to many changes in scholarly research himself. And since 2010 it has become much more common for talks, once an ephemeral activity, to be recorded. Those who wish to listen to Joe speak now have the opportunity to do so online. For a few examples available at the time of writing see 'Afghanistan: Coinage during the Transition to Arab Rule' *Historical Perspective*, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5koUHLKt8>; 'Kushan gold coins: using die studies to understand the function of reverse designs', *Oriental Numismatic Society*, 2021 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0Hlu3BM5vo&t=29s>; 'Coin Collector/Scholars of Europe', *Coin Stars*, 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgP99BK-u0k>; 'The Origins of Coinage: China and Turkey c. 600 BC' *The Ancient India and Iran Trust*, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTSXbyMfcpw&t=1897s>

John Menzies
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For more Fred cartoons see 'More Fred' and
'The Extraordinary World of Fred' available from bookshops.

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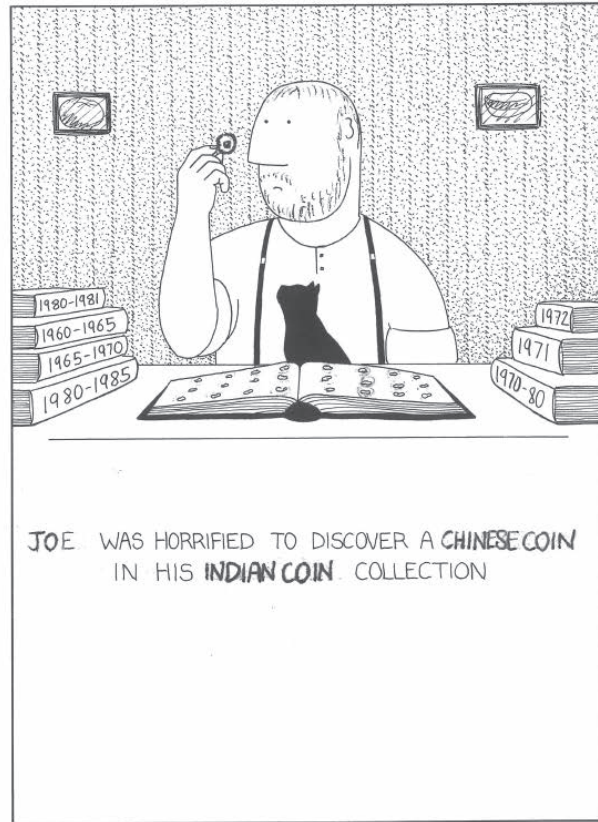


Figure 3. Joe was horrified to discover a Chinese coin in his Indian coin collection

Joe is known for his many aphorisms, the injunction 'Look at the coins!' being one of them, encouraging us always to look closely at the primary material with our own eyes. He is also known for his kindness and support for younger colleagues, often tempered by his self-deprecating sense of humour – as in this modified gift card which he gave to Helen when she took over the East Asian collection.

The card illustrates Joe's firm belief in the importance of fundamental technical numismatics, looking at the coins, and his interest in both Chinese and Indian numismatics – both represented by our contributors. In fact, the card illustrates three different currencies, as it still features its pound sterling price tag. Joe actively encourages the study of modern money, medals, badges, tokens, and paranumismatica, in many cases personally collecting over-looked but fascinating examples of the physical representations of money.³ Joe's interests and contributions reach far beyond the detailed study of small objects. He has a strong interest in how stories are told through coins, especially in museums, and one

of our contributors, Alexandra Green, picks up that interest in museology, discussing the often contentious problems of displaying colonial collections. He also has a particular interest in art, having written about the sculptor Eric Gill and the earliest depictions of the Buddha. Two of our contributors, Elizabeth Errington and David Jongeward, take up the topic of art history in their contributions. Finally, our last contributor, Stephen Sack, shows the breadth of Joe's interests beyond numismatics by presenting several of Joe's unpublished poems.

A note on the papers. Several contributions were translated for this volume. Where that is the case we have retained the original text after that of the translated paper.

Joe's Bibliography since 2010

- 2010 *Catalogue of the Japanese Coin Collection (pre-Meiji) at the British Museum*, London, 2010, 218 pp. (with H. Wang, S. Sakuraki, P. Korniki, N. Furuta and T. Screech).
- 2011 The coins of the Kashmir king Harshadeva (AD 1089–1101) in the light of the 'Gujranwala' hoard,

³ Readers interested in Joe's direct contributions to the British Museum collection can see records of more than a thousand such objects at <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG106237>

- Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society*: 28–33 (with M. Ahmed).
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