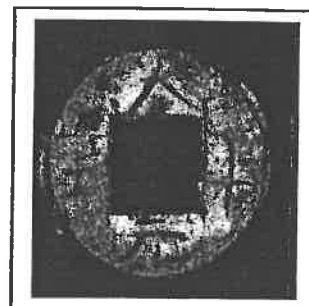


Verslag van de 345^e bijeenkomst op
Woensdag 18 april 2001

Spreker: T.D. Yih
Onderwerp: Munten van Tegal

13 leden aanwezig



Javanese cash from the Ethnographical Museum at Rotterdam(EMR) , The Netherlands by T.D. Yih and J. de Kreek. ONS Newsletter 146, Autumn 1995 (Summary of a talk given to the ONS meeting in Leiden on 21 October 1995, a full paper is in preparation)

The collection of Javanese cash pieces from the EMR consists of about 270 pieces. They belong to the so-called Van Rede collection and they are reported to originate from the region of Tegal, east of Cheribon on the northern coast of Java. It is quite possible that a number of pieces are identical to the ones from the collection of the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences as described by van der Chijs in 1898. They have a yellowish-white appearance and are very thin and fragile. A number of pieces are broken.

Four main types can be distinguished:

Firstly, pieces with Chinese legends. These include northern Sung reign titles such as Xianping yuanbao and Taiping yuanbao and a legend Tianxia Taiping that is often present on charms or palace issues. The characters are generally corrupt. Often there is a reversal in the position of the characters Ping/bao and Tai/ping.

The second main type consists of **blanc pieces** without characters or symbols. They occur with round and square central hole and might also have single or double rings.

The third main type consists of pieces with **geometrical symbols** like dots (●), stripes (|), crosses (x) or plusses (+).

The first three main types account each for about 30 % of the total number of pieces. They often also bear have one or two concentric circles running through the characters or symbols.

Finally, a fourth main type can be distinguished which is much less abundant and which accounts for about 8 % of the pieces. It is an **intermediate between main type I and III** and is characterised by the presence of crosses or plusses and a character resembling the letter "A" (a corruption of the character xian?).

There was one piece with possibly a Jawi or Arabic inscription.

The weight ranges from 0.11 to 1.2 grams and varies considerably within the main types. The lightest pieces are found in the blanc series and the reduction in weight is mainly caused by the extra-ordinary size of the central inner hole. The Tegal pieces are much more fragile than the lead and bronze Javanese pieces described by Mitchiner (1986). The fragility of the Tegal pieces complies with the data on the picis, the cash pieces circulating in the archipelago at the arrival of the Europeans. The corruption of the characters is not in line with the supposed production in southern China and export to Java, but rather suggests a local production on Java itself.

The authors are grateful to Dr. Ross and Dr. v.d. Meiracker for providing the opportunity to study and analyse the coins.

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