

Further Notes on a False Plantation Token

Adrian Lansen, Koen Helling and Gary Oddie

The die used to strike the Goerach Batoe 1 Dollar Reis 1890 “Proof” plantation token has recently been noted⁽¹⁾. That the die was found along with other dies known to have produced modern fantasy transport tokens casts serious doubt on the authenticity of specimens of this particular plantation token. This note adds further detail to the history of this issue.

In 2001 only four tokens were known of the 1 Dollar Reis 1890 Goerach Batoe token (LaWe 96⁽²⁾, LaBe 87⁽³⁾), where it was remarked that the source and reason for this issue were unknown. The token was described as a copper (proof?), with dimensions 35.5-35.7 mm. The weight is approximately 16 grams. It is also noted that the umlaut is omitted on the “ü” in “FUR” (Fig. 1.).

The normal issues of these tokens, LaWe 93-95 (LaBe 85 and 86) have a dimension of 38-39 mm. and an average weight of approximately 24 grams.

The “Proof” from the A. J. Lansen collection, was auctioned in 2012⁽⁴⁾. It had been bought c.1998 at a small coin dealer in the USA, with no doubt about its authenticity.

In February 2004 a “proof” token from the same die was offered to Simmons Gallery in London, who doubted the authenticity due to the poor strike and condition and they were advised not to buy (AL).

In the May 2005 and October 2018 auctions of the MPO in IJsselstein, the Netherlands, sold a high grade “Proof” token of this type.

Around December 2012 the same “proof” tokens appeared for sale on eBay and the Dutch site “Matktplaats”. In the following years these tokens appeared for sale in auctions by Baldwin’s and Stack’s Bowers with estimates ranging from 220 to 2300 USD. As far as is known, some were sold, others remained unsold.

In July 2016 an English vendor (first name Craig) offered one of the authors (KH) a group of 34 of these “Proof” pieces. (Figs. 2 and 3.).

The vendor stated that these tokens came from a reliable source about 40 years ago and were taken from the former Netherlands East Indies together with another group of about 50 plantation tokens. The vendor claimed to have sent a token to Baldwin’s for research, with the conclusion that it was probably a genuine piece, but with the remark that it was necessary to send a sample to an expert in the Netherlands for further research. It is not known if any other dealer or collector in the Netherlands was contacted. The vendor has not replied to enquiries since November 2016.



Fig. 1. Goerach Batoe tokens photographed together; false (left) and genuine (right).



Fig. 2. Group of false Goerach Batoe tokens.



Fig. 3. Close up of false Goerach Batoe tokens.

In the period 2016 to 2019 tokens from this group, recognizable on colour, patina, irregular shape etc. have occasionally been offered on eBay with a starting price of about 1200 Euro. As far as we know none have sold.

Returning to the dies⁽¹⁾, enquiries with the vendor of the dies has revealed that they were bought at a UK auction in 2017/18. The metals of all seven of the dies have been tested using an XRF analyser, a Niton 950 XL2 with a metals calibration. The results have confirmed that, within the measurement error, the dies are all made from the same metal alloy known as Ni-Hard 1⁽⁵⁾.

It is thus concluded that the Goerach Batoe die is of modern manufacture (c.1990s) and all of the tokens struck from it are false.

References and Notes

- (1) G.M. Oddie. A Group of Dies for Fantasy Tokens. BNS Research Blog, accessed 5 November 2019. <https://britnumsoc.blog/2019/10/20/a-group-of-dies-for-fantasy-tokens-gary-oddie/>
- (2) A.J. Lansen and L.T. Wells Jr. *Plantage-, Handels-, en Mijngeld van Nederlands-Indie*, 2001.
- (3) A.J. Lansen and M.L.F. van der Beek: *Plantation Tokens of the Dutch East Indies*. Private Print, Ijsselstein 2018.
- (4) Baldwins Auctions. No 74. The A.J. Lansen Collection of Plantation tokens etc. Lot 1096. 9 May 2012.
- (5) The main measured components are as follows: Fe 93.3%, Ni 2.83%, Cr 1.63% and Si 0.572%. Whilst this XRF analysis cannot determine the Carbon content of the alloy, the other elements are in the correct proportions to be a unique fingerprint for Ni-Hard 1. This is part of a family of white cast irons alloyed with nickel and chromium to give high hardness and resistance to abrasion and wear especially during impact. This specialist alloy was first used for industrial applications in the 1920s and 1930s and is commonplace today.