

The Theories of Alexander del Mar

by Michael E. Marotta

Born in 1836, Alexander del Mar wrote several books on money in the late 19th century.

- *A History of the Precious Metals, From Earliest Times to the Present*, George Bell & Sons, Covent Gardens, 1880
- *A History of Money in Ancient Countries from the Earliest Times to the Present*, George Bell & Sons, Covent Gardens, 1885
- *Money and Civilization*, George Bell & Sons, Covent Gardens, 1886
- *A History of Money Systems*, Effingham Wilson, London, 1895
- *The Science of Money*, MacMillan & Co., New York, 1896.

Most of his assertions are uncontroversial and supported by expert opinion. The reason I went to his works was a comment by Thomas M. Martin (tmm) who cited Del Mar's assertion that ancient Indian scriptures place coinage in the Indus valley long before it was used anywhere else. In fact, this is, indeed, Del Mar's single most remarkable assertion and he makes it in a compelling context.

However, Del Mar has been all but forgotten by historians if not by history. It is fair to note that none of what follows is supported by other writers. I also state for the record that this itself is not conclusive. I found his work fascinating.

Del mar cites "The Code of Manou," part of the earliest Vedic writing, dating no more recent than the 12th century BC. According to this Code, 32 Rati equal 1 Dharana, which translators show to be from the word DHRI "to hold." I found this compelling because the DRACHMA comes from DRAX "handful." Also, the "Code of Manou" gives fines as punishments and specifies a weight, but not a material. Del Mar takes this to mean that there were coins, as for instance, when people of his time paid in "pounds."

Furthermore -- and here I find the evidence most compelling -- Del Mar ties Manou etymologically to Mene of Egypt and to Minos of Crete as echoic citations of even earlier Aryan lawgivers. One weak point in all this is that although a Lydian-like "dump" was uncovered amid Minoan ruins on Crete, no evidence of Hindic/Aryan coinage exists.