

Report on the International Numismatic Council Travel Grant

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Travel Grant: €2,000

Research visit: Astana, Kazakhstan, September 2026

I am grateful to the International Numismatic Council for the award of a €2,000 Travel Grant, which supported a five-day research and conference visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, in September 2026. The visit formed part of my ongoing doctoral research at Leiden University on the coinage and monetary economy of Otrar and its position within the economic and cultural networks of medieval Central Asia.



The principal academic purpose of the visit was participation in the 2nd International Archaeological Symposium, The Great Belt of the Eurasian Steppes: Transformation of Cultures Across Time and Space, held at Nazarbayev University on 24–25 September 2026 and organized in connection with the 35th anniversary of the Margulan Institute of Archaeology. The symposium brought together archaeologists and other specialists from Kazakhstan and the wider international research community and provided an important opportunity to discuss my numismatic research within its broader archaeological context.

At the symposium, I presented a paper entitled “Otrar Between Steppe and Oasis: Numismatic Evidence for Cultural Transformation and Frontier Connectivity in Early Medieval Central Asia” in the panel Current Issues in the Medieval Archaeology of Kazakhstan. The presentation drew upon the numismatic

material forming a central component of my doctoral research and considered how coin evidence can contribute to our understanding of Otrar as an economic and cultural frontier between the settled communities of southern Kazakhstan and the wider Eurasian steppe. Presenting this material to specialists working directly on the archaeology of Kazakhstan provided valuable feedback and opportunities to discuss the interpretation of the numismatic evidence alongside other categories of archaeological material.

The visit extended beyond the formal conference programme. I visited the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, allowing me to engage more directly with the archaeological heritage of Kazakhstan and to place my work on Otrar within a broader regional context. These visits were particularly useful for considering questions of settlement, connectivity, material culture, and the relationship between urban communities and the steppe that are central to my interpretation of the Otrar material.



An equally important outcome of the visit was the opportunity to strengthen my professional network in Central Asia. During the symposium and associated activities, I met with senior museum and archaeological representatives from Astana, Almaty, and Kyrgyzstan. These discussions provided

opportunities to present my ongoing numismatic research, exchange information about collections and current archaeological projects, and establish contacts relevant to future research in Kazakhstan and elsewhere in Central Asia. This was particularly valuable for developing longer-term relationships between my research at Leiden University and scholars and institutions working directly with Central Asian archaeological and numismatic material.

The INC Travel Grant contributed to the costs associated with the five-day visit, principally international airfare, accommodation, local transportation, and subsistence. The grant made it possible for me not only to disseminate the results of my doctoral numismatic research to an international audience, but also to engage directly with archaeological sites, museum collections, and colleagues in the region from which the material I study originates.

The visit therefore contributed both to the immediate development of my doctoral research and to longer-term scholarly collaboration in Central Asian numismatics and archaeology. The discussions and contacts established in Astana will inform the completion of my doctoral dissertation and the further publication and development of my research on Otrar and the monetary history of medieval Central Asia.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the International Numismatic Council for its support. The Travel Grant provided an important opportunity to present my research in Kazakhstan, engage with the region's archaeological community, and strengthen the international connections necessary for the continued study of Central Asian numismatics.