

THE PLANCHET

EDMONTON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

August 2014

Volume 61 Issue 3



One of the First Commemoratives





2012 - 1st Place
ANA Outstanding Local
Club Publication Award



2011 - 2nd Place
ANA Outstanding Local
Club Publication Award



2010 - 1st Place
RCNA Best Local
Newsletter



THE PLANCHET

August 2014 Volume 61 Issue 3

Other Stuff

- 3 **Message From The President**
- 3 **Next Meeting**
- 5 **About Your Society**
- 6 **Summer Barbecue**
- 31 **ENS Classified**
- 31 **Coming Events**

The Planchet Team:

Editor-In-Chief: Paul Purdie
Content Editor: Chris Hale
Co-Editors: Pierre Driessen & Marc Bink
On-Line Distribution: Pierre Driessen
Printing and Mailing: Howard Gilbey

ON THE COVER:

<http://en.wikipedia.org>
 Martin Luther

*Disclaimer: The opinions herein are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Edmonton Numismatic Society.
 The editors, at their sole discretion, reserve the right to accept or refuse any material submitted for publication.*

Feature Articles

8 **A Penny's Worth**

One of the First Commemoratives

A story about a Saxon Thaler
by Marc Bink

18 **Ancient/Medieval**

An Issue of Octavian/Augustus

Rome's first emperor takes office
by Terence Cheesman

22 **Amid the Ruins**

The Allure of Striated Electrum

The first coins ever issued
by Wayne Hansen



Message from the President

Marc Bink 2014



Summer is upon us again; the time of year when most people come out of hibernation and enjoy the few nice weeks of hot weather that we get in this country. It seems most of us always have some place to go or something to do; it's a good thing that the days are long and the nights warm and short.

Hopefully you've made some time in your summer travels for something numismatic. I know I make a concentrated effort to visit any local coin shops or antique shops I where ever I end up, one never knows what interesting treasures one finds in different places, - or not, in my case there aren't many medieval thalers around on the west coast.

Sometimes the treasures can be found closer to home; never write-off garage sales or local antique shops, the point is, you never know what treasures are out there unless you go look. Get hunting!

As far as the club goes, summer is usually a quiet time, nothing much is going on. During the summer hiatus, most of us are busy with more important things like family and going places to worry about the upcoming show season. But it is coming. I'd like to also remind members to keep in mind we're still looking for new ideas for for club sponsored activities or causes. Feel free to contact me or a member of the Executive if you've got any ideas or if you've seen something that you feel the club should be doing.

We did have an excellent outing and Barbecue at Jim Vanderleest's place near Westlock in early July. Jim and company put on an excellent spread in his wonderful back yard. The weather cooperated for the most part, a short little squall didn't dampen the spirits of the record sized crowd gathered there, we just kept going, enjoying the ribs and all the fantastic desserts. On behalf of the club, I'd like to thank Jim for being a gracious host and providing us all a very good time. I think I speak for us all in saying it was well worth the drive and it was a great experience. Thanks Jim!

That's all I've got...here's hoping you all have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you and hearing about your new found treasures on Pizza Night in September!

Marc

NORTHGATE STAMP & COIN

12516 118 AVENUE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA. T5L2K6 WWW.NORTHGATESTAMPANDCOIN.COM

Edmonton's Fastest Growing Coin Shop

- Gold
- Silver
- USA Coins
- World Coins
- Canadian Coins
- Colonial Tokens
- Provincial Coins
- World Paper Money
- Canadian Paper Money
- Trade Dollars/Medallions
- Royal Canadian Mint Coins
- Collector Supplies
- Wholesale/Retail
- & MORE!



ROYAL CANADIAN MINT
MONNAIE ROYALE CANADIENNE
OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTOR

Hours of Operation

Monday.....	10:00 - 6:00
Tuesday.....	10:00 - 6:00
Wednesday.....	10:00 - 6:00
Thursday.....	10:00 - 6:00
Friday.....	10:00 - 6:00
Saturday.....	10:00 - 5:00
Sunday.....	CLOSED
Holidays.....	CLOSED

SPECIAL OFFER TO ENS MEMBERS

10 % OFF

2010/2011 Royal Canadian Mint Coins*



Valid ENS membership card required

Contact:
Matthew Stzym

780-424-8511

* Some conditions apply. Offer does not include select special issue products, bullion, or face value coins. Offer only valid with presentation of a valid ENS membership card. We withhold the right to revoke the offer at any time.

About Your Society

Minutes from ENS Monthly Meeting on May 14, 2014

Marc Bink opened the meeting at 1925 hrs and welcomed everyone.

July 6, 2014 was announced as the date of the annual ENS BBQ. It will be hosted by Jim Vanderleest at his place north of Edmonton. An invitation email and map will be sent to all current ENS members. People are requested to bring their own lawn chairs and drinks.

Marc mentioned that the ENS directors and executive will be discussing the direction the club should take. A part of the ENS mandate is to educate the public about numismatics. Club members are encouraged to provide ideas on how we can achieve this.

The Planchet

The latest edition of The Planchet should be published in the next week or so. Marc thanked Paul Purdie for taking on the role of editor.

The usual request for article submissions was made. Our biggest shortfall is, oddly enough, Canadian content. Pierre Driessen spoke about the plan going forward for The Planchet. Editions

older than one year will be unlocked and available to all on the ENS website. The files will also be fully searchable on the World Wide Web.

Presentation

Wayne Hansen gave an interesting talk about his visit to the Canberra Mint in Australia. One of his highlights was that he was able to strike his own coin there!

Show & Tell

Dan Gosling showed a rare non-magnetic numismatic BU 2005P one cent in a RCM uncirculated set that he found in Windsor, ON. He mentioned that the topic of copper plated zinc & copper plated steel cents will be in the upcoming May 2014 issue of The Canadian Numismatic Journal.

Conclusion

Door prizes were drawn, and the meeting was adjourned at 20:48 hrs.

2014-15 Executive

Marc Bink - President
David Peter - Vice President
Pierre Driessen - Treasurer
Mitch Goudreau - Secretary-
Paul Purdie - Editor-In-Chief
Jamie Horkulak-Past President

Directors

Marv Berger
John Callaghan
Terry Cheesman
Ermin Chow
Howard Gilbey
Roger Grove
Chris Hale
Wayne Hansen
Jeremy Martin
Andy Vanderleest
Greg Wichman

Webmaster: Markus Molenda

Librarian: Mitch Goudreau

Show Chair: David Peter

Social Activities:

Pierre Driessen

Youth Director and

Facebook: Ermin Chow

Twitter: Roger Grove

PRIVACY POLICY

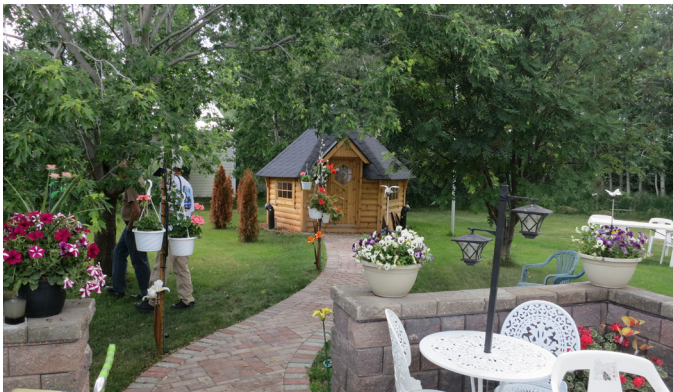
The Edmonton Numismatic Society (ENS) does not engage in the sale nor distribution of personal information to third parties for commercial purposes. All information collected is strictly for ENS internal use and purposes, to permit the ENS Executive and its agents to communicate with you about ENS related matters and to provide you with the full benefits of ENS membership.

THE PLANCHET COPYRIGHT NOTICE

© Copyright 2014. All information herein, the design, style and format are the property of the Edmonton Numismatic Society (ENS). All rights reserved. No part hereof may be reproduced in any form or medium, electronic or otherwise, without the express written consent of the ENS Executive Committee. Current members of the ENS are entitled to make one (1) printed copy of this issue and to store one (1) copy in electronic format as part of their membership privileges, further distribution is strictly prohibited.

Annual Barbecue

The ENS Annual Summer Barbecue was held on July 6, 2014, a beautiful Summer day. The passing sun-shower (5 minutes at most) did not dampen the enjoyment of all who attended. The ENS thanks host Jim Vanderleest assisted by Hugh Patterson, Shirley Lane, Linda Vanderleest and Andy Vanderleest for a superb meal featuring several kinds of ribs with all the fixings, and a memorable day in the country.



@ The Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 10, 2014



Royal Alberta Museum, 12845 - 102 Avenue
Meeting Start Time 7:15pm

- Annual ENS Pizza Night All invited, Bring a Guest
- Society matters
- ENS November 8 & 9, 2014 Show and Sale updates
- Show and tell
- ANA and RCA delegate reports
- Silent auction
- Door prizes draws

For more information regarding these events, or to add an item to the agenda
please send an email to editor_ens@yahoo.ca
P.O. Box 78057, RPO Callingwood, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5T 6A1



facebook®

The ENS is now on facebook. Come visit us at
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Edmonton-Numismatic-Society>, be our friend and 'like' us.

Get up-to-date information on club news and coming events.

Talk to other club members and take your club experience to another level. If you have any suggestions please talk to Ermin Chow or the Executive.



twitter™

The ENS is now on twitter.

Come follow us at **@ENSCoinClub**.

Get updates on coming events, ask us numismatically related questions, find other friends and stay connected to the numismatic community.



One of the First Commemoratives

By Marc Bink



It was proving to be a slow but steady morning at the appraisal table during the spring ENS Coin and Money Show and Sale. Nothing really interesting had come up. We'd seen quite a few collections; other than a pile of fakes that had been bought in Thailand, nothing really stood out. The pace was steady and not as frenetic as it had been in shows past. Still, I had resigned myself to the fact that it was steady enough for me not to get a chance to go "hunting" on my own. Every time I tried to get away, a collection or something came up that prevented me from leaving. Mostly it was my own curiosity, because we had more than enough competent volunteers on hand who could have subbed in. This coin that appeared was a once in a lifetime thing; I was in the process of getting up to leave and then bang; there it was. It now had my full undivided attention. This coin looked far more interesting than the last lot, which was a handful of 1804 US silver dollars that all had exactly the same colouring and scratches on them. It was right up my alley... I couldn't believe my eyes, a medieval Saxon Thaler had just walked in and landed on my appraisal table. That just shouldn't happen here in western Canada. Even in Europe, these coins are scarce and seldom turn up at coin shows. This is old-money collectible auction stuff, nowhere near the same league as Uncle Marty's small cent collection in Whitman folders. We did the archeology to confirm it, and sure enough, once a value was discussed, it appeared like the owner was motivated to sell it. Things were beginning to move fast...



First, a Confession...

While we were pouring over the catalogs, I noticed that one of the dealers who specialized in ancient and medieval coinage happened to be on my side of the room. I flagged him down and asked him to have a look. His eyes lit up when he saw it. He found a listing of the coin on his phone at about the same time that we discovered the listing in the catalog. I called him aside and asked him if he thought the value listed was right, because it seemed awfully low compared to other thalers of the period. His listings confirmed that the catalogs were out of date, and he told me, "It would be a good deal at double that price" which I then told the owner. The dealer then offered to buy it for the value that we had agreed was appropriate for the coin. The owner couldn't give him the coin fast enough, and the whole thing was going to go down right here and now. I asked him and the owner to step away to do the deal, since I couldn't be involved because of ethical concerns. Truth is, I wanted the coin, and it fit my collection. I was inwardly cursing my misfortune but as an appraiser, I couldn't be involved in a potential conflict of interest. The owner, having at first just come into the show looking for a confirmation of what he had in his pocket, walked away thumbing a lot more cash than he had expected. He claimed that he got it as payment for a gambling debt, and he was walking away with four times the amount he was owed. The dealer was happy, as he got it for a good deal. Everyone was happy except for me. I muttered something under my breath about the fact that I'd have happily paid that price for it. Oh well, it looked like it was going to head east and wind up in someone else's collection. And then, in a moment that I'll be forever grateful for, the dealer asked, "You want it?" to which I replied, "Of course!" He it gave it to me for the price he had just finished paying for it, no questions asked. It took a little fast talking and a few tense moments until some arrangements were made, but then the next thing I knew was that I was the proud new owner of a Saxon thaler commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, minted in 1630.

The whole process took under ten minutes. Who says this hobby doesn't have drama?

Once upon a Time, Long, Long Ago in a Land Far, Far Away...

It all started many years before my coin was minted.

Imagine, if you will, a European town square, filled with merchants, farmers and men, women and children of all stripes and occupations. It's a grimy, cool day in the fall, and there's a chill in the air. It wouldn't be long before there's snow on the ground. So the farmers and merchants are tying up loose ends before the snow hits. There's a lot of jostling, shouting, cursing, animals bleating, wagons rolling and other activities going on, as people hawk their wares and get things done. There are a lot of different smells in the air too; from livestock to unwashed bodies and raw sewage that is floating down gutters. There's a lot of smoke in the air. This is a world lit only by fire; grimy, dirty and brutal. Mixed in with the stench is the odd pocket of freshly baked bread aroma and the smell of cooked meat from the food vendors. The whole town has come out and taken advantage of the last bit of fall, before the cold weather hits, and life became an exercise in winter survival again. It is October 31, 1517 in the town square of Wittenberg, in the middle of Germany. Except it wasn't known as Germany then; this town was just part of the Duchy of Saxony and as such, part of the Holy Roman Empire.

The town square was, and still is, dominated by the town hall building, and on the far end to the left of the town hall, there is a row of merchant houses. Nowadays, it's pretty postcard, all clean and manicured and painted bright colours. Then it was grimy brown, covered in soot streaks and filth. There was no paint, and no one was selling idealistic postcards. But there was something equally as idealistic for sale at that time.

It is in this one area, in the shadow of the Stadtkirche (city church) that a monk sits with perhaps a staff of one or two other



monks at a crude long table. In front of this table, is a line-up of the who's who of the town. Everyone is there, and just before the next person in line gets up to the front, the one preceding has dumped a number of large silver coins in a simple non-descript coffer. For this "donation" (the larger the better, obviously), the buyer receives a piece of paper that insures the bearer of a window-seat in Heaven. The monk's name is Johann Tetzel, and he's selling indulgences for the Pope so that the reconstruction of St. Peter's Basilica can continue. With a smile and a promise that one's generosity will not go unrewarded, he sends yet another unassuming victim on his way to salvation, conveniently bypassing Purgatory. All of this is assured by a flowery document signed by no lesser of a personage than the Pope himself. It doesn't get any better than that.

Across from him, taking this all in, is another monk. He is not working for Tetzel. In fact, he is not pleased with what he sees. However, he doesn't say anything. He

shakes his head and starts to walk down the street towards the Schlosskirche (castle church) a few blocks away. In his hand, he carries a carefully written document which he has addressed to the bishop who resides at the Schlosskirche. He is an unassuming man, of average height and build, wears the simple garb of a monk and has the then-popular tonsured haircut indicating his lowly status. And like most, he can't get an audience with the bishop. Being just a lowly monk and a scholar after all, he must do what the others do, if they want the bishop's attention. He must post his letter on the door. After arriving a few blocks away from the busy town square, he proceeds to do just that. He nails up his 95 complaints or "theses" on the door. The text is carefully worded and couched in conciliatory terms so as not to offend. It is in the "political correctness" of the day, except that it is written in Latin. The monk's name is Martin Luther ¹, and little did he know that what was first intended to be an academic objection of some church practices would soon take on a life of its own.



And Now, What Really Happened...

This is what the Lutheran Church would have us believe, that Luther nailed up his 95 theses on the door of the Schlosskirche. We may never know if it is the truth, as the story comes from one of Luther's contemporaries and disciples, Philipp Melanchthon ², who it just so happened was not in Wittenburg at that time. Apparently, he got it from someone who was there and saw it happen, or maybe from Luther himself. It probably came from Luther himself, since he had this knack for embellishing things, much like his famous

inkwell incident later on in the Wartburg ³. What supposedly ticked Luther off was the fact that Tetzel was up in Wittenburg essentially robbing money from poor, gullible people. Luther asked in Thesis 86, "Why does the Pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?" Luther also believed that since forgiveness could only be granted by God, not the Pope, and that those poor, gullible, people, who figured that these indulgences would acquire for them a sort of "get out of jail for free" card were in essence wrong. He stated that good Christians should continue to believe in and follow the words of Christ and not be taken in by these bogus pieces of paper that had only a secular value to them. Needless to say, once the bishop read this, he wasn't pleased. At first it looked like it was going to be handled as a purely internal affair, because the theses were written in Latin, and no one else could read them. Then in January 1518, a German copy appeared and began to spread like wildfire. It took about two weeks to cover all of Germany and about two months to go Europe-wide. All of this was because of a recent invention that the Church first ignored and then wanted banned, or at the very least be strictly controlled, the printing press. The printing press, and the speed with

1. Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a religious reformer. Born in a well-off family, he first started to study as a lawyer before switching over to theology and becoming a Catholic priest, monk and scholar. After 1517, he was a wanted man and never again left Saxony where he was under the protection of the Duke. He was a very prolific writer, spending the first years of his internal exile holed up in Wartburg castle, managing to translate the Bible into German. As a result he is also considered the father of modern German. Essentially ignored by the Church, he resumed living out in the open in about 1523 at an arm's length away from any Catholic institution. Married in 1523, he raised a family in Wittenburg, and along with Melanchthon started the religion that bears his name. He died of a stroke in 1546.

2. Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) was one of the co-founders of the Lutheran movement. He was a professor at Wittenburg at the time when he came under Luther's spell. Having a very varied education, after he obtained his "master" degree in 1516, he took up theology. He was already gaining a reputation of being a bit of a rebel when he was invited to a professorship at Wittenburg by Luther in 1519. Melanchthon and Luther had a stormy friendship. Even though in the end the two men disagreed about a lot of things, Melanchthon never wavered and supported Luther until the latter's death in 1546.

3. Luther purportedly threw an inkwell at the Devil who appeared to him while he was writing his Bible. Modern scholarship thinks that he tossed a full chamber-pot at what he thought was the Devil. He was either drunk, or like most, he probably used pewter cutlery and cups, which, when exposed to some alcohols or tomato juices or sauce, can cause mild lead poisoning.

which information could be written and copied, revolutionized the world. It was the internet and the world-wide-web of its day. And like the web today, it was almost impossible to control during its infancy. Presses sprung up everywhere, and where they sprung up, so did the use of the vernacular language as opposed to Latin ⁴. This was the beginning of the Reformation and the beginning of the end of the Church's hegemony over Europe and the western world.

The Augsburg Confession, 1530

Fast forward to a few years later, in 1530. Luther had been excommunicated and was under a death sentence. He had hung around in the Wartburg castle under the protection of Prince Frederick III of Saxony, where he translated the Bible into German. After a few years, he more or less lived under the protection of the Prince in the open and went back to Wittenburg and, got married and started a family. He could not leave Saxony; there was a warrant for his arrest and a stake with lots of kindling waiting for him. Remember that this was the time of the Inquisition and the start of the Reformation; the Church was fighting for its life. But he was getting too popular, so the Church didn't dare do anything about him in the open in Germany. What was also interesting is how long it took for the Church to act to try to rein him in. It would appear that the Bishop in Mainz wasn't about to do anything that might jeopardize the sales of indulgences, considering he got a cut from each one sold. The Pope wanted money too. The

only time either of them grew concerned, was when the sales started to drop off, and the clamour from the public was getting too loud. Previously, the Church moved with lightning speed against what they saw as heresy; witness what they did to the Cathars about 300 years earlier. So to take a couple of years to go after Luther and then to leave him to live freely out in the open was suspicious to say the least ⁵.

Luther and Melanchthon proceeded to codify a form of Protestantism known as Lutheranism. Luther was the hammer and the driving force, and Melanchthon was the moderating influence who softened the edges and made it palatable to everyone. Both of these men are considered the founders of Lutheranism today. By 1530, things were coming to a head. The Holy Roman Empire, never a rock-solid union or easy to govern, was in danger of coming apart - yet again. So in January of 1530, Emperor Charles V decided to convene an Imperial Diet to resolve the pressing issues of the day and hopefully destroy or discredit the Protestants or at absolute worst, reach some sort of concordat with his wayward electors and princes. Luther and Melanchthon and a few others were asked to present their plank to the Emperor at the Diet. Of course, the Protestants greeted any Imperial Catholic invite with suspicion; they met beforehand in Torgau to formulate their response. Luther stayed behind in Coburg, as the others went further on in. Augsburg was a free Imperial city that is basically in the heart of Catholic Germany. It is located in

⁴ Previously, books were hand copied by literate monks only in Latin, which was the language of commerce, the law and of the Church in all of Europe. This was a hold-over from the old Roman Empire that the Holy Roman Empire, founded by Charlemagne in 800 AD, wanted to emulate. All roads and all edicts led to Rome; at least in the religious sense. The political side was governed by the Holy Roman Emperor, which by the 16th century, was a Hapsburg from Spain. The Emperor was elected by a group of princes called electors, and crowned by the Pope. He nominally ruled over a hodgepodge of warring states and city states, comprised primarily of what is now Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy and the Low Countries of Holland and Belgium.

⁵ This is because of the formation of the Schmalkaldic League. Charles V had petitioned the Pope to leave things alone unless there was a disruption of income, he would deal with the wayward princes and Lutheranism as needed. Note that most Protestant Religions are in essence a protest against the ruling institutions, the Empire and the Church, and less about religious differences.

Southwestern Bavaria. Luther wouldn't have made it two feet in Bavaria, before he would have been arrested and burned at the stake as a heretic.

Melanchthon had worked out a masterpiece. The articles agreed upon at Torgau were to be presented as an "apology" by the Protestant princes. The Elector Johann of Saxony, Margrave Philip of Hesse, Margrave Georg of Brandenburg, Duke Ernst of Luneburg and Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt, along with representatives of Nuremburg and Reutlingen, signed it. It was presented before the Emperor who decreed that it be read before him the next day on the 24th. The Protestant princes wanted the document read in public, but the Emperor refused. The princes held their ground, but the Emperor wouldn't budge. He gave them an ultimatum, read it or else, so they came up with a plan. On the 25th, two Saxon chancellors, Christian Beyer and Gregor Bruck, presented the Augsburg Confession to the Emperor. In defiance of the Emperor, Beyer then proceeded to read the full text in German, loud enough so that it could be heard outside the building. Then both copies were presented to the Emperor. The Latin copy went with the Emperor, and the German copy went with the Imperial Chancellor, the Elector of Mainz. The first printed or published copies came from Melanchthon, who it seems

rightly assumed that none of the originals would ever see the light of day again. The contents of the Augsburg Confession that Beyer read contained 28 articles. 21 of these became the cornerstone of the Lutheran faith. The other seven were "antitheses", or seven statements describing what the Lutherans believed were abuses or wrongs in the Roman church. Obviously, there is more, but that is outside the scope of this article and will not be discussed here.

The eventual costs of the Augsburg Confession were huge, both in property and in terms of lives lost. As with any religion it seems, somewhere along the way, people end up getting killed, but in reality, it's all about the money. The funny thing is Luther seemed to understand this and sought to prevent it. He obviously failed. In this case, the Emperor ordered that a rebuttal or a "Confutation" be drafted, but it was very poorly done and never released to the public. It was also never presented to the Lutherans. Charles decided that it was "good enough" and gave the Protestants an ultimatum. Melanchthon was again called upon to draft a rebuttal, which ended up being widely published as an "Apology to the Augsburg Confession". He did so with his usual clarity, and the "Apology" was widely circulated around Germany and started to influence others.





The Emperor Rejects the Augsburg Confession

Lutheranism Takes Hold and the "True" Church Begins to Fade...

By 1535 a league of Protestant princes had been formed to counterbalance the Catholic influences in the Imperial government. It was called the Schmalkaldic League ⁶. Membership was granted to those states or cities who supported the "Apology" and the Augsburg Confession. From northern Germany the movement spread into Denmark and Norway and received more than a passing glance from Henry VIII of England. It failed in Bavaria and further south in Austria, owing to the stronger Hapsburg ⁷ or Catholic influences. The Schmalkaldic League finally came to blows with the Emperor in 1546-47. For the Catholics, this turned out to be the classic case of winning the battle but

losing the war. They beat the Schmalkaldic League and forced its dissolution, but in the end, were forced to concede and grant the Lutherans full legal rights and recognize their religion in 1555. The Lutherans then continued to refine and codify their beliefs, and the Augsburg Confession and the Apology became the cornerstone of the Lutheran Confessionals in the Book of Concord in 1580.

So the 100th anniversary of the above-mentioned Augsburg Confession is the event commemorated on my coin. The coin was struck in Saxony at the Chemnitz mint. Now here's where it gets a bit interesting; the issuing power or authority is the Albertine line of the Wettin family that ran Saxony. The man who protected Luther and that is

⁶. The Schmalkaldic League was formed more or less to offset or protect the German princes and electors from the ever increasing taxation and encroaching authority of the Hapsburg monarchs. The Hapsburgs had successfully taken over and made many crowns hereditary as opposed to elected, thereby eroding the Feudal structure that had been in place for centuries. As the Hapsburgs married into or dominated more of the crowns of Europe, those that didn't belong or weren't affiliated began to get uneasy. It was actually more about power and preservation of the status-quo than it ever was about religion, which was used as an excuse in order to convince peasants to enlist and die for the cause of the princes.

commemorated on the coin is from the Ernestine line of the Wettin family. The Ernestine line used to run Saxony, that is, until they got clobbered during the Schmalkaldic wars. The Albertine line was the lesser line then, and it is through the conniving of Augustus, one of its members, that the latter managed to gain the Duchy, after he switched allegiances during the war and sided with the Emperor. As a reward for his subterfuge, he and his descendants were declared the Duke and Elector in place of members of the Ernestine line which now started to squabble amongst themselves and fade into obscurity. A branch of that line eventually became the House of Windsor in England in the mid-19th century, when Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha married Victoria of Hannover and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. In 1917, they dropped the German titles and became known as the House of Windsor.

The First Modern Style Commemorative?

As far as I can see, this is one of the first coins to ever commemorate an event in the past in a similar fashion to the way it's done now. There have been others in the more distant past of course, but none in medieval history. The Romans and the Greeks before them used to commemorate many or all events on coinage, but that practice fell out of favour during the Dark

Ages when the art of coining was all but forgotten, and it became heresy to hold or make coinage, let alone celebrate any event of note on coinage. The other reason, and probably the real one, is because medieval moneyers and die-cutters quite honestly didn't have the skills required to make coins like that. They were for the most part illiterate and used only crude tools and methods to cut dies. The other big reason was that silver for coins was in very short supply up until the large deposit in Johannisthal was discovered. Most silver coinage was made on very thin flans that didn't strike up too well. It was only after the thaler size coin was "invented" that the art of coining was advanced, and mintmasters were given more liberties with design. And that was only to a point. The sovereign had to approve of the designs. Most medieval and early Renaissance coins were almost cartoonish in appearance. It wasn't until about the middle of the 17th century that coins started looking more sophisticated and realistic. A lot of that had to do with the invention and application of the screw press. Using a screw press meant that the dies would last longer, so the engravings could be more elaborate and pretty. The Baroque era produced some of the finest looking coinage since the Classical Period in Greece, but only in the thaler size of coin. Invention of moveable type revolutionized legends. No longer were they hand-engraved. Type-font became

7 *The Hapsburgs more or less held on to the title of Holy Roman Emperor until Napoleon finally defeated them and broke the Empire up. Nominally, the Austrian Hapsburgs claimed in their titles that they were still the true representatives of the Holy Roman crown even after the formation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Holy Roman crown jewels still reside in Vienna to this day. It would appear that they forgot that the position of Holy Roman Emperor was largely symbolic and elected, and not inherited like they eventually claimed. The German speaking world was more or less divided along religious lines well into the 19th century, with Bavaria siding more with Austrian interests than German. However, the Prussians had other ideas, and they managed to wrest control of Bavaria and the rest of the German states from the Austrians in a short, but brutal, little war in 1866.*

8 *This is based on the 10 Commandments and the idea as expressed in the quote, "Neither a borrower nor lender be". The Church decried money or cash; it believed in barter but kept all the wealth for itself. The Church also had strict rules on the concept of interest on loans, many which if applied today would result in a lot of people being incinerated for "usury". This policy meant that a lot of old Roman denari circulated secretly for centuries in amongst the nobility, until the Church realized that money was a necessary evil. To mitigate this evil, the medieval Church felt it was better that it got all the money, and no humans should be trusted with it lest they succumb to greed. By around 700 AD coins were being struck in England, and bracteates started appearing on the continent. "Real" coins didn't start appearing there until the middle to the late 1300s, many modeled after the ubiquitous English penny.*

much more uniform, and the public began to expect it. Just a comparison between the Belgian ducaton I wrote about in my last article, as compared to a Bavarian thaler of the same period, shows the differences between a "milled" coin and a "hammered" coin. It is like night and day. The hammered coin is crude and needs the fatter, larger fonts just in order to be legible. Detail is an afterthought. The milled coin is far superior; there's detail on the portrait, it's more life-like, and the lettering looks uniform. It's also finer and not as blunt looking. Not to mention, each coin coming off a milled press is identical, whereas anything made with a hammer is unique to itself. A perfect illustration of the differences between hammered and milled are very apparent in English sixpences of the late 1500s. The milled coin is gorgeous, the hammered looks like a crude counterfeit in comparison.

This Saxon thaler is a hammered coin typical of its time and represents the best that a hammered coin can be. One can see the style transitions being made in German thalers of this period; the old medieval style lettering is replaced by a more modern italic script, the portraiture is becoming more realistic, and fine details are being introduced. There are still some old design elements though. The font looks hand engraved, there still is the ring of denticles surrounding the portrait that serves as a line-guide for the text, and the outside denticles are an afterthought. There was no collar used. The coin was cut round by hand, struck and then trimmed or filed for weight. Here again, is a typical practice of the day. On the obverse, the coin features Johann-Georg of Saxony in a traditional pose. He's got a sword clasped in his hands leaning on his shoulder. The legends have "CONFESS: LUTHER: AUG: EXHIBITAE: SECULUM" (Commemorating the Augsburg Confession) on the obverse, and on the reverse, it has "NOMEN: DOMINI:

TURRIS: FORTISSIMA" (The Name of the Lord is the Strongest Tower) with Johannes (The Steadfast) of Saxony in a similar pose with the sword on the right shoulder, but obviously wearing an older style hat. There is also a crossed halberds mintmark on the obverse side, indicating that this came from the Chemnitz mint. The coin is listed as KM-411 in the Saxony (Albertine) section of the Krause Standard Catalog of German Coins (2011), and it has a Davenport number of 7605. So it's a relatively well-known piece. The condition of my coin is VF, almost EF. There's only wear on the highest points of each portrait. The coin is beautifully centred, and the die line-up was well done. Whoever made this coin took great care to do a good job, and the weight is correct, indicating that the coin was not clipped. There are no stress cracks or anything on the flan, nor are there any uneven or out-of-round edges. This coin was never mounted, which was the fate of so many of these thalers once they were demonetized. The toning indicates that the coin was probably cleaned at some point in the last century or so, the patina looks older and is pretty uniform in the right places.

The coin is not rare per-se. There are always a couple of them for sale, but they are valuable in the higher grades. Mine is at the cusp; - it could go either way. I am happy with the deal I got on it, it's easily worth double what I paid for it. It's got good "eye appeal". But that doesn't mean an easy sell, if I decided to get rid of it. (Perish the thought!) The problem there is, who collects these things around here, or who would want one at the retail price? This is the problem with medieval coins, it's a very limited market around here. But it also would be difficult to find a better example of a 17th century Saxon thaler anywhere else as well, let alone here in Edmonton, and who would have thought one would turn up here at an appraisal table during a coin show!

9. *Weight 28.59 grams Diameter 45 mm*

Bibliography

Heylyn, Rev. Peter, (1633) Mikrokosmos, A Little description of the Great World, 6th Ed, Oxford, 1633

Cantor, Norman F. (1963-94) Civilization of the Middle Ages, New York, 1994, Harper Collins

Heer, Friedrich, (1968) The Holy Roman Empire, London, 1994, Phoenix Press

Ashley, Maurice, (1969) The Golden Century, Europe, 1598-1715, London, 2002, Phoenix Press

Dillon, John Talbot, (1782) A political Survey of the Sacred Roman Empire, including the Titles and Dignities of Electors, Ecclesiastical and Temporal Princes, Counts, Prelates, Free Cities and Knights that compose the Germanic Body, London, 1782, Pater-Noster Row

Online Articles;

Wikipedia;

On Luther, on Melanchthon, on the Augsburg Confession, on Wittenberg, on Saxon History



Rare Paper Money at the Regina Show

Rare Canadian paper money is one of the highlights of the upcoming Regina Coin Club Fall Show and Sale.

Included among the rarities are two playing cards that were used as money in the French colony of New France (now called Quebec, Canada). The playing card money was issued because of a lack of coinage and is considered rare. Two playing cards will be shown at the show including an undated seven of clubs and a ten of diamonds dated 1758. The notes were issued just prior to the British victory at the Plains of Abraham, just outside Quebec City during the Seven Years War (French and Indian Wars in the U.S.). After a three-month siege, British general James Wolfe's troops defeated the soldiers and militia led by French general Louis-Joseph, Marquis of Montcalm. Both generals died of their wounds.



Another pair of interesting items on display will be front and back tin type proofs from a 1913 \$20 note from the Bank of Saskatchewan. The principal promoters of the bank were prominent

businessmen from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, bank shares did not sell well and when World War I broke out in 1914, the new bank was given up. No notes were issued by the bank but this unique set of tin proofs will be on display.



Coin, stamp, sports card and militaria dealers from across western Canada will be in the bourse, with large quantities of coins, stamps, sports cards and militaria for sale.

The action takes place October 18-19 at the Turvey Centre, located on Armour Road just north of Regina next to the Evraz steel plant. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for teens aged 13-16, while children aged 12 and under are admitted free if accompanied by an adult.

For more information contact George Manz (306) 352-2337. www.reginacoinclub.com



AN ISSUE OF OCTAVIAN/AUGUSTUS

By Terence Cheesman

Sometimes surfing the web can remind me of things that I should actually know and find significant. Recently, I noticed that the Italian mint had issued a commemorative coin honoring the 2000th anniversary of the death of Augustus, who died 19 August 14 A.D. He was a brilliant politician in the insanely lethal game of politics prevalent during the death spiral of the Roman Republic. As the last man standing, he instituted a series of reforms, which though they brought peace and security, also brought autocracy. A short while ago, I discussed a very early transitional denarius of Octavian which was minted very shortly before the battle of Actium, the battle which transformed him from Octavian, a Roman warlord, to Augustus the first Emperor of Rome. That coin was repositioned in the sequence of the coinage issued by Octavian Augustus as the result of ongoing scholarly debate which not only affected it but also many other coins as well. As mentioned, one of the considerations was the similarity of style and presentation with a number of other coins minted in Italy somewhat later. Recently, I acquired another coin of Octavian which also highlights the transformation of Octavian to Augustus.

Years ago I bought of book (The Power of Image in the Reign of Augustus) by Paul Zanker. Zanker is a professor of classical archaeology at the University of Munich and has written extensively on Roman art and architecture. Besides looking at the art and architecture that still survives from the reign of Augustus, he also looked at some of the coins of Augustus, and it was this part of the book which really caused the scales to fall off my eyes. In one issue, Zanker decided not to look at the coins as individual items each with a separate message, but as a group, where each coin acted in concert, adding further nuance to the rest of the group, and thus creating a rather complex, multi layered message. It caused me to re-examine other groups of coins that I could date with certainty, and again in many cases, I got similar results. The Romans would frequently use their coins to convey complex political messages. Most collectors have heard the adage," Buy the book before the coin". I

would like to add," Not only buy coin books, but also ones on, history art, in fact any book that can give you a better understanding of the environment in which your coins were designed, struck and circulated".

The issue is made up of six denarii. All the coins have the same reverse legend, CAESAR DIVI F. In full this would read CAESAR DIVI FILIUS which would roughly translate into " Caesar the son of the divine (Caesar)". Octavian at this point in his career felt that the simple familial connection between him and his great uncle Julius Caesar was all that was needed to advertise his fitness to rule. The six coins are further subdivided into three matched pairs. Each pair consists of one coin with a bust of a deity and a full length figure on the reverse of Octavian and the second coin with a bust of Octavian on the obverse with a full length figure of the deity on the reverse. The deities are in order Venus, Victory and Pax(Peace). Overall, this

is a very attractive group of coins. As noted before, most of the previous issues of Octavian are very crude. These coins are very finely engraved, though the hair of the deities is rendered in a very stiff, traditional style, very reminiscent of coins minted over eighty years before. This contrasts quite dramatically with the image of Octavian, who is depicted quite naturally

with strong features and a full head of wavy hair. The lack of an obverse legend gives the image a rather regal look, as it resembles the coinage of the Hellenistic kings particularly those

coins minted by the Seleucids. The only difference is that his portrait lacks the diadem which is seen on almost all Greek royal

portraits. Also the very simple reverse legend seems to be in keeping with this look. Romans generally never seem to miss an opportunity to place

information on a

coin. Octavian's new coinage with its minimalist legends is at odds with this tradition and thus would really stand out.

The first two coins begin the story. The first one with the obverse of Venus has on the reverse the image of Octavian signalling an attack. He is bare headed, in military uniform, and his cloak is billowing behind him in the wind. His right hand is

stretched out, signalling the direction he wants his men to go. He carries his staff in his left hand. Overall, his posture is very aggressive, dynamic and forceful. The second coin of this matched pair already signals the outcome of Octavian's military venture. On the reverse, Venus, semi nude, is holding the helmet of Mars in her right hand and a staff in her left,

very much like that of Octavian. The column that she is resting on supports a shield emblazoned with the comet of Divus Julius Caesar. The image is very clear. Venus, the divine

ancestress of the Julian genus to which Octavian is a member, has acted on behalf of her descendant. Just as she defeated

Mars, she too defeats Antony. Venus, being the goddess of love uses Antony's love of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra as a weapon to defeat him. This coin also has a much more subtle message as well.

Octavian was always in the position of underdog. Throughout his career, he was in the weaker position facing far stronger, more experienced enemies. The image of a semi nude female, weakness multiplied, but despite this, triumphant, holding the arms and armour of her more powerful enemies, would very succinctly describe Octavian's career up to that point.



The second two coins continue the story. On the obverse of the second coin is a bust of Victory. On the reverse of this coin is the image of Octavian in heroic nudity with his right foot resting on a large globe. He holds an aplustre in his right hand and is resting on a staff carried in his left hand. An aplustre is the stern ornament on a warship, thus this image signifies two things, the first being that Octavian has won a great victory at sea, and two that this victory has left him effectively the master of the world. The planet is now his soccer ball. This coin is the clearest dec-



laration of Octavian's regal or even god like status. "He doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus". Shakespeare's commentary on his uncle Julius Caesar could very easily describe his position. The reverse of the other coin making up this pair reinforces the message. Victory is depicted standing on a globe holding a wreath in her outstretched right hand



and a palm in her left. She offers both symbols of victory to Octavian.

The last pair completes the message. On the obverse of the first coin of this pair is the bust of Pax, the goddess personifying peace. The reverse has the image of Octavian in the act of saluting his troops. Octavian is depicted relaxed, his right hand raised in a gesture to command silence. In his left hand, he carries his staff, now resting on his shoulder. What is remarkable is that while Octavian



remains in military uniform, his greaves, which are armoured shin guards, have been replaced with civilian foot ware. Octavian has very carefully moved away from the regal, monarchical imagery, suggesting that once all this fighting is over he will return to Roman constitutional norms. This image is not only seen on the coins but is re enforced by the famous statue of him from Prima Porta which conveys the same message. The reverse of the second coin

of the pair shows the figure of Pax. In her right hand, she offers an olive branch, but in her left, she cradles a cornucopia signifying plenty. In effect Octavian is promising peace and prosperity.

This group of coins is remarkable in that there is a lot of information revealed in a series of very simple images.

One can see a very subtle dialogue between Octavian and the audience who would see his coins. On the one hand Octavian congratulates himself on his military success and shows that he could very easily be a monarch or a dictator. Some of the coins very clearly depict him as such. But others back away from this interpretation. The severe, old fashioned looking Republican deities, Venus, Victoria and Pax, suggest a reverence for the traditions of



the Roman state. The last coin where Octavian, warlord, begins the transformation to First Citizen or Princeps shows the beginning of the careful journey he made to become the first Emperor of Rome.

History records very few instances where an individual who has either had absolute power or has been offered it has refused it. George Washington was offered the kingship of the new United States and refused it.

This had a powerful effect on people at that time and has done much to elevate his status both within the United States and beyond. Octavian's restoration of the Roman Republic gave him similar renown. In the end, he was able to keep virtually all of his power without appearing to do so.



The Augustus of Prima Porta





The Allure of Striated Electrum

By Wayne Hansen



"The first true coins are tiny but they dazzle collectors with their aura and sparkle".



We know that special things tend to come in small packages. In the case of the early Greek electrum coinages, those packages can be particularly small and wondrous. I would like to highlight one fascinating and historically important

ancient electrum coin type - the scarce series of proto coins from circa 650-600 BC that began as simple, innocent, precisely weighed globules of electrum, which were then hit with a punch as they unwittingly lay basking on a grooved, 'striated', surface. The process of adding an identifiable pattern to the globule's obverse, in this case a flattened, striated design, created the first true coin type. Obverse designs on all such ancient coins allowed for better definition of identity and value. They were the first of many generations of Greek, Roman and modern coin issues. Although the new striated coins no doubt followed the early, type-less, globular pre-coins that were only marked by a reverse punch, it is not possible to say absolutely that the striated-type coins were the first true coins. Around the same time as they appeared, other true coins with more complex and distinct obverse images were minted in the same general region. This has made the determination of a precise chronology of coin issues difficult. I am happy to think, however, that the little striated issues are the primary contenders for first-coin status.

True coins, of course, needed to have defined types, particularly a defined obverse type in order to be recognized as real coins. In archaic times, the coin type identified a coin as a specific issue, and, taken with its size, it assisted in determining the coin's value. It is uncertain as to whether the early striated or geometric electrum issues were tied to a particular issuing authority, that is, an official entity that would have served as guarantor of composition and value. Some contend that we must be able to tie each true coin to an issuing authority to be valid, preferably to a king rather than a merchant; but I am not convinced that the specific nature of the issuing authority needs to be determined. Is a T-shirt not a T-shirt because it does not have the Nike logo on it? Every series of true, early electrum coins had identifiable obverse and reverse types, as well as strictly defined weight standards, which leads me to believe that the coins were minted under strict control. Strict control implies a responsible minting authority, even if that authority may not have issued royal edicts or been invited to join the best social clubs of the time. Such coins were not mere tokens (a distinction that had not yet arrived) for their precious metal content conveyed an obvious intrinsic value.

The Beginning

You will recall that the earliest coinage was created in western Asia Minor, somewhere within the tribal regions of Ionia or Lydia (see map in Figure 1), using natural river electrum or a mix of refined metals. My article titled 'A Sense of History – Coin Types in the Greek Era', in the Jan/Feb 2014 issue of *The Planchet*, provides an overview of early coin development. Further to the introductory comments above, one or more numismatists have suggested that the first true coin was the fully-fledged, roaring lion head trite of King Alyattes from Sardis, a wealthy, inland city of Lydia. This trite displayed a true royal emblem on its obverse, the lion head, and it was minted in large commercial quantities at a very

early date. Others consider that the first coins developed from the aforementioned type-less electrum globules, or pre-coins, that have been attributed to Ionian cities along the coast of Asia Minor. True Ionian coins, like my featured striated variety, evolved quickly from plain globules into proper coins that incorporated geometric and figural obverses. They were likely minted in such cities as Miletos, Ephesos and Phokaia around the same time as, but probably before, the Lydian lion head trites. A quantity of these early Ionian electrum coins, including striated examples, were found in the extraordinary Artemision Hoard, which was hidden around 600 BC under the foundations of the rebuilt Temple of Artemis (the Artemision) in Ephesos. If you remember your junior high history, or perhaps if you are a devoted fan of *Jeopardy*, you will already have known that this large Temple of Artemis was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (see a model at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Artemis).

In fact, several cities and chiefdoms in western Asia Minor commenced coin production before 600 BC, and the practicality of it spread quickly to other centers around the Mediterranean. 'Even if a naturally variable mix of gold and silver was used for the electrum alloy in the first coins, the alloy's mix was soon artificially set to a predetermined ratio of refined metals. The fixed ratio allowed for defined exchange rates and facilitation of potential profits (the actual ratio did fluctuate over time and place).' Electrum maintained its initial status in precious metal coinage for around half a century, before mints began to produce separate gold and silver coins. However, a few Greek cities in Asia Minor, including Miletos, Phokaia and Mytilene, continued to use the electrum alloy until the 4th century BC, largely for a multitude of fractional local issues, but it was a losing battle against the more readily accepted, pure precious metal currencies used elsewhere in the Greek world.



Figure 1 - Maps Showing Ionia and Lydia

The maps above show western Asia Minor (Turkey) with the approximate locations of several ancient tribal regions. Ionia is highlighted on the left and Lydia is highlighted on the right, both of which issued very early electrum coinages. Ephesos and Miletos were the largest and most well known ancient sites in Ionia, while the capitol of Lydia was the equally prosperous city of Sardis.

The Striated Series

Striated electrum coins are deceptively simple. Their earliest obverse design is geometric, in a one-directional sort of way, consisting of a series of regular or roughly parallel grooves and ridges across the flattened surface. It is apparent from looking at 'sold' examples of striated coins that the obverse lines can be of various styles – ranging from thick or thin, closely or widely spaced and parallel or not quite parallel. The reverse is usually a single, square punch, a double punch or a double punch with central crease between them, depending on the denomination. Less common variations do occur on both obverse and reverse, with an odd figure added to a striated obverse background, or a more complex punch design used on the reverse.

When I stated in the introduction that the striated coins tended to be small, I mean small – 'if they was a house, an' you went through the front door, you already be in the back yard'*. But then, the striated

types weren't much different in size from other early electrum coins that were produced in a series of ever-reducing fractional sizes – ranging from small to tiny. That's right, even the earliest pre and proto coins were issued in denominations, though it is generally only the smaller denominations that now appear occasionally in the marketplace (hektes and below). The denominations include the very rare full electrum stater (17mm - 14.4g), hemi-stater (15mm - 7.2g), 1/3rd stater or trite (12mm - 4.8g), 1/6th stater or hekta (9mm - 2.4g), 1/12th stater (7mm - 1.2g), 1/24th stater (5mm - 0.6g), 1/48th stater (4mm - 0.3g) and theoretically the 1/96th stater (0.15g) – all using the Milesian weight standard. Figure 2 shows examples of the striated series from commerce. There are only about seven full staters known.

(* Interpreting the old compendium of jokes about how poor you were based on the size of your house: 'My Moma's house was so small,.....')



Figure 2 Examples of Striated Ionian Coins from Commerce

This Figure illustrates the range of striated Ionian electrum denomination issues sold in recent years. All were minted in the latter part of the 7th century BC and adhere to the Milesian weight standard that pegs the full stater at approximately 14.4 grams and the 1/48th stater at 0.3 grams. Diameters range from approximately 17 mm for the stater to 4 mm for the 1/48th stater. Obverse striation patterns vary from finely delineated to crude. Depending on the denomination, the reverse may contain one, two or three square punches. Most punches are of a plain style but the 1/12th and 1/24th staters sometimes display a decorated punch as shown in 2h and 2j above.

Photos assembled by the author, courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, except for 2a (Numismatica Ars Classica), 2b (Freeman and Sear) and 2g (Roma).

The physical size of the striated coins belies a certain mystique that attaches to the type. The main allure of striated coins is their understated simplicity – that, and the intrigue of their earliest role in coin development. The allure often translates into a premium price for good examples. Their simplicity epitomizes the Archaic period of Greek coinage.

One other enhancing, perhaps magical, concept is tied to the striated obverse design: the concept that the parallel grooves struck onto the electrum surface replicate the pattern of sand ridges one would find in a natural stream-bed. Underwater ridges are created on the surface of a silty or sandy stream-bed by the currents and ripples of its flowing water. It was beside such streams in ancient Lydia and Ionia that natural electrum nuggets were found, so it is rather poetic that the natural amalgam of silver and gold that came from ancient streams was used in the production of this coinage

My Striated Coin

I didn't think about striated coin issues for many years, first, because I had other priorities (don't tell anyone), and because the few available examples were 'wait for it'... quite expensive. Also, did I mention they were small? Then, two years ago, I saw a lovely little 1/24th striated stater as a 'Buy It Now' on eBay. It is uncommon to see a relatively rare coin offered on eBay, so your suspicions are immediately aroused. On the other hand, the coin looked good with sharp obverse lines and a nice perimeter edge, plus it had a fancy reverse punch. The only detraction was that the eBay photo was fuzzy, and the colour of the coin appeared to be very light – I had to ask about that since I prefer coins with a rich gold colour. The fixed price was quite high, slightly topping \$600 with shipping, which obviously served to keep the tire-

kicking, lowest-bidding, bottom-feeding coin trollers away (note: I usually consider myself one of the same). In the scheme of things, and after doing some research, the price actually seemed half way reasonable, so I bought it. I later learned that a prominent dealer, Pars Coins, had sold the coin to the eBay seller for about the same price in 2007. The seller was an enthusiastic fellow living in California who happened to have a small collection of tiny archaic coins (he didn't care much for Hellenistic art), including several examples of silver Athena-head fractions minted in the Ionian city of Phokaia. (He also had a large Himera gorgon bronze similar in type to a great one that I had bought at auction from CNG and now use as my eBay identifier, which he noticed because he had bid on that same Himera coin in the CNG sale). I ended up buying one of the seller's small Athena fractions as well – a teeny hemi-obol only 6 mm in diameter and weighing 0.30 grams – so that it could be shipped with my little electrum piece.

The seller quickly assured me that my new 1/24th stater was an attractive gold colour, and he sent better photos to demonstrate. Nonetheless, when I received the coin I was pleasantly relieved to see that it was fine. Not only that, it had the sharpness I had imagined. Figure 3 shows one of the demo comparison photos that the seller provided before shipment, and Figure 4 shows my own photo of the new coin.

My coin is interesting. It has a lovely golden hue; it was precisely struck so that the coin's obverse and reverse designs are perfectly centered within its remarkably even, globular shape; and its broad, globular sides are covered by a subtle texture, like hundreds of little hammer marks. The obverse displays a clear set of ridges that vary in thickness and spacing, but the ridges are not strictly parallel – much as you would expect to

see in the natural environment. However the ridges contain a miniature mystery, which I noticed immediately when I saw the coin. I think might be a test cut at the 10 o'clock position on the figure 4 obverse photo - a tiny sharp test cut on a coin that is 5 mm wide. It is well hidden, aligned with the ridges, only revealing itself as it extends into the un-struck body of the globule. There might be a different explanation, but if it is a cut, it certainly doesn't detract from the coin's overall appearance.

The reverse is a bit special too. Most striated coins are struck with a simple,

square punch. From published examples of striated electrum, however, it is known that one of the punches used in the series was decorated with perimeter striations and a central geometric, angled form across the opening. This is the punch that was used for my coin, which provides another level of uniqueness. In a bit of a twist, the same punch is found on more than one striated denomination – it was usually used for some 1/12th staters, and Kayhan illustrates it on a 1/48th stater. The meaning of the more complicated reverse design is unknown, though the term 'decoration' may not be too far fetched.

IONIA, UNCERTAIN Archaic ELECTRUM 650-600 BC



Figure 3 – eBay Listing and Seller Photo with Archaic Silver Fractions

Above are the first images that I saw when buying the featured striated coin. I had liked the coin shown in the eBay photos since it was a nice grade and well shaped. However I had reservations about its light colour, so the seller sent a photo of the coin set among several archaic silver fractions he was also selling. I was then more assured that it had a dark gold colour. (Photos courtesy of the eBay seller).



Figure 4 – Collection Photo of My 1/24th Striated Coin

Ionia, Uncertain Mint (Electrum - 0.59g, 5mm). 650-600 BC, Milesian weight standard. Obv: Flattened striated surface. Rev: Incuse square punch with finely serrated sides, center transected by a bent, raised, linear form. Ex: eBay Buy It Now, March 2012; Pars Coins, 2007.

This coin is precisely struck plus it has a nice sharpness and pleasant gold colour. It also has the less common, geometric reverse sometimes found on 1/12th staters and reportedly on a 1/48th stater. Overall, it is a lovely example of one of the earliest coin types.

(Collection of the author and photo by the author).

In Closing...

If you like small but impressive coins, the striated electrum are worth a look. There are more of them available at auction now, although prices often seem excessive, even considering their historical importance, their pretty colour, their unique rippled design, and their general intrigue. The highest prices are realized when sales descriptions emphasize the earliest nature of the coins in a few choice words, such as noted in this catalogue header: 'From the Beginnings of Coinage'.

Bullion value doesn't cut it in this situation, where you have to pay a minimum of \$1,000 to \$1,500 PER GRAM for a reasonable example (mine was \$1,000 per gram). By comparison, with 31 grams in a troy ounce, the current pure gold price is \$41 US per gram. A very similar striated 1/12th stater, the next denomination higher than mine (OK, 2 mm wider and 0.6 grams heavier), with identical types and appearance but in a much more banged-up condition, was estimated recently at \$300 and sold CNG electronic auction for \$2,500 plus

percentages, equal to \$2,900 US. Another, in better condition but with a plain punch, also closed at auction recently for \$3,000 plus fees, totaling \$3,600 US. For these recent examples, at 1.21 and 1.22 grams each, that is equivalent to \$2,400 and \$3,000 per gram - for electrum - not even 'pure gold! A 1/24th striated coin, similar to mine but with a non-descript punch' and in much worse shape, was estimated in the same CNG electronic sale at \$400 and sold for a staggering \$2,500 plus fees, or \$3,000 total. At a weight of 0.59 grams, the new owner paid \$4,900 US per gram for that coin!

But since when has the price ever put you off buying anything?

"The past is never dead. It's not even past." – William Faulkner

"I had fun once. It was awful" – T-shirt I saw in San Francisco (Anon) – Unofficial coin collector motto.



New Book Tells the "Untold Story" of Sudbury's Big Nickel by Jeff Fournier

The Big Nickel - a giant 30 foot replica of the Canadian 1951 commemorative 5 cent piece, towers over the City of Greater Sudbury from its home at Dynamic Earth. It is truly a sight to behold. The iconic giant recently turned 50 and as part of the celebrations, Ted Szilva - the creator of the Big Nickel, has released a book - "The Big Nickel: The Untold Story". It is a complete account of his dream and the obstacles he overcame to create the Big Nickel and the world's first and only numismatic park. It is a story that - like the Big Nickel itself - is larger than life.



The book covers the conception, construction and operation of The Big Nickel in the world's first Numismatic Park. Ted's son, Jim, co-authored the book, which was released in Sudbury on June 26 at an impressive book launch held at Dynamic Earth's Atlas Copco Theatre.

The book contains dozens of photos of Ted's


family and friends and offers a pictorial timeline of the construction and operation of the Canadian Centennial Numismatic Park - home of the Big Nickel.

Anyone interested in reading a unique part of Canada's history, or who is interested in learning more about the Canadian Centennial Numismatic Park and the world famous Big Nickel, should definitely pick up this book - it is a fascinating read.

Books may be purchased on-line through the website which contains more history, photos and newspaper clippings of

the Big Nickel. Visit www.thebignickelbook.com.

Also at this website, visitors are given the opportunity to download my 1995 book about the medals and tokens of Sudbury entitled "Sudbury Numismatics" - free to all - in pdf format.



GEORGE MANZ
COINS

P.O. BOX 3626
Regina, SK S4P 3L7
306.352.2337
george@georgemanzcoins.com
www.georgemanzcoins.com

National Pride

~Coins & Stamps~

WE BUY~SELL~APPRAISE

- GOLD & SILVER BULLION
- MILITARIA & MEDALS
- COLLECTABLE WATCHES
- WORLD COINS & PAPER MONEY

8005 - 104 Street
Edmonton, AB
T6E 4E3

RAY NEIMAN
Ph: (780) 433-7288
Fax: (780) 434-9466




AGENT FOR THE ROYAL CANADIAN MINT


Canada Coin & Paper Money

"Everything Is Worth Something"

Purchase
Sell
Consign
Appraise



Ron Thompson
P.O. Box 425
St. Albert, Alberta T8N 7A2
Tel: (780) 459-6868
Email: roncoins@shaw.ca
http://members.shaw.ca/roncoins

CPMS CNA 

Next Issue

The Planchet after this one will be issued in early September and the operative dates will be to Mr. Hale by August 10 and to me by August 20.

Paul Purdie
Editor
(ppurdie@telus.net)



Classified & Coming Events

PLACE YOUR AD HERE FREE FOR ENS MEMBERS

No limit of ads and no limit of words. Ads must be numismatically related and can include books, coins, paper, supplies, buying, wanted, selling, tokens, bullion, medals, Canadian, world, websites, shows, etc.

The ENS reserves the right to refuse to print any classified ad in whole or in part. Ads posted for one year will be removed unless the member can confirm ad is to continue. All classified advertizers must be ENS members.

All ads to be submitted to editor_ens@yahoo.ca e-mail or given to the Editing Team at monthly meetings.

Wanted

All period Napoleonic memorabilia & Militaria. Contact Bill at wjdy2k@hotmail.com

Early English or German hammered coins. Contact Marc. mbink@shaw.ca

Canadian Decimal coin sets. Great for gifts. Low prices. Contact Ray, (780) 433-7288

Early French medals or English/British Coins dating from 1642-1821. Contact Pierre. pierre@nancykbrown.com

For Sale

Complete Date
1968, 1969 & 1970 Edmonton Klondike Dollars in Silver. Prefer in original case of issue. Call Howard (780) 998-0434 or cell (780) 298-0434, e-mail taneri9@mcsnet.ca

Large collection of certified & raw coins & banknotes, some up to 50% off cat. Inc. Errors. Call John (780) 455-8375

New Membership Applications

No new members this month

These individuals have applied for membership into the Edmonton Numismatic Society. Pending any objections from the membership at large, these individuals will be accepted as "Members in Good Standing", effective this publishing date. Any objections to the aforementioned applications must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Edmonton Numismatic Society, and will be evaluated by the Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Coming Events

September 10, 2014 - ENS September Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

October 8, 2014 - ENS October Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

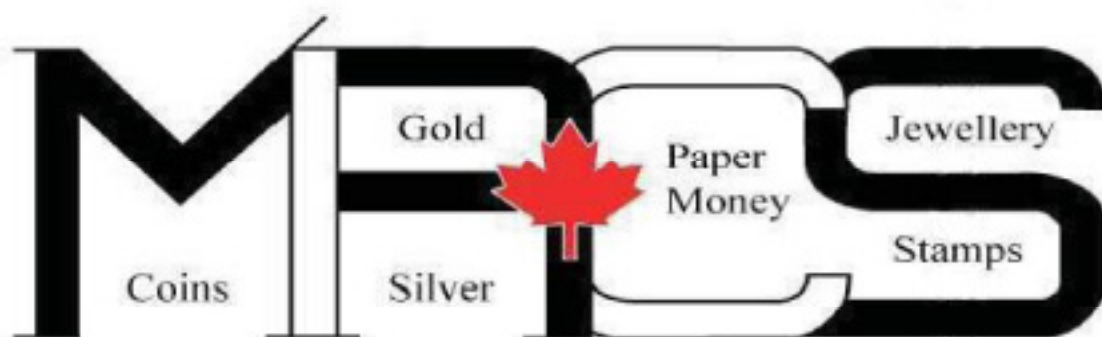
November 8 & 9, 2014 - Edmonton's Fall Coin Show and Sale, Edmonton Hotel & Conference Centre, 4520 - 76 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 0A5, dealers wishing to attend call 780-270-6312.

November 12, 2014 - ENS November Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

December 10, 2014 - ENS December Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Live auction with all proceeds to charity.

January 14, 2015 - ENS January Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

To list your coming events - send them to editor_ens@yahoo.ca.



Your Source for Silver and Gold Bullion



Up to the minute quotes on precious metals

TOLL FREE 1-877-TRY-MRCS

FULL SELECTION OF COIN AND STAMP SUPPLIES IN STOCK

BUYING AND SELLING

website: mrcscanada.com // email: mrcscanada@shaw.ca

12303-118 AVE. EDMONTON 780-482-3373