ENS Spring Coin Show and Sale - Page 30

THE PLANCHET

EDMONTON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

Jan/Feb 2014
Volume 61 Issue 1

Spanish Netherlands

Ducaton

Ancient Greek Types

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THE PLANCHET

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Other Stuff

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ON THE COVER:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_IV_of_Spain

Philip IV of Spain (Spanish: Felipe IV; 8 April 1605 – 17 September 1665).

Coin: author's coin, the source of the article.

Feature Articles

Message from the President

David Peter 2010-14

Happy New Year to everyone. I hope that you had very happy holidays with friends and family.

With the new year comes, our annual elections during February's regular club meeting. I hope that we will see both old faces and newcomers on the ballots. I am always pleased with the amount of representation that our club gets from our members and am sure that there will be a number of volunteers vying for the executive and board positions.

In numismatic news, it will be interesting to see how the cold spell has affected the New York International Numismatic Convention. Scheduled at the same time as the FUN Show in Florida, both shows were expected to have high turnouts with a lot of interest in their auctions. The FUN show had several multi-million dollar coins on the auction block, including the highly sought after 1913 Liberty head nickel and 1787 Brasher doubloon.

Our upcoming March show is also expected to have high turnouts. But we will likely not be seeing any Brasher doubloons or 1913 Liberty head nickels. I do though expect some very nice Canadian and world coins, paper money and tokens nonetheless. Hope to see you there.

David

@ The Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Royal Alberta Museum, 12845 - 102 Avenue

Meeting Start Time 7:15pm

- ENS society matters
- March 1 & 2, 2014 ENS Coin Show and Sale: recap and update
- Silent Auction results
- Show and tell (bring items from the show to share with fellow members)
- Silent auction
- Coffee, pop and cookies
- Door prize draws
- Presentation if time permitting

For more information regarding these events, or to add an item to the agenda please send an email to editor_ens@yahoo.ca
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By Mitch Goudreau
ENS Secretary

About Your Society

Minutes from ENS Monthly Meeting on Jan 8, 2014

1) David Peter the ENS President opened the meeting at 1918 hrs. He welcomed everyone and gave us a gentle reminder that only about 1/3 of the ENS members have paid their membership dues so far.

David briefly spoke about the upcoming March 1 - 2 coin show and how we are getting ready for it.
- Advanced show tickets have been printed and are now ready for sale
- Posters and leaflets are available for distribution

2) Marc Bink briefed us on the slots required to be filled by volunteers for the coin show and passed a sign up sheet around the room for members to fill.

3) Howard Gilbey informed everyone that 94 out of 102 lots were sold at the November coin show auction. The consignment form for the upcoming auction has been sent by e-mail to the ENS members and he has hard copies available tonight. He encourages us to take advantage of this stating that the auction is seen by many visitors as a highlight of the show.

4) The ENS requires an Audit Committee of at least two persons to review our financial affairs. John Callaghan, Andy & Jim Vanderleest graciously volunteered to do this.

5) Terence Cheesman as head of the Elections Committee stated that he has heard from no one in regards to the upcoming club elections.

6) The standard monthly plug was made for contributions to *The Planchet*. It's a great place to read about new things but we of course require members to submit articles. It's also ironic that our biggest shortfall happens to be on Canadian content!

7) Show and Tell
- Before the show and tell started someone mentioned that the RCM's recent series on Superman will likely bring some comic book collectors into our own great hobby.
- 1818 "Restoration of the Monuments of the Ancients" medal issued by Pope Pius VII who was often in conflict with Napoleon was shown. This medal celebrates the return of items to the Vatican after having been taken by the French.
- An electrotype of a famous ancient Syracuse coin was passed around. It would have been a $40,000 coin if it was real.
- Also sent through the room was a denarius of Roman Emperor Septimus Severus who reigned from 193 – 211 AD. Accompanying this was a Caesars Atlantic City casino chip depicting this same Emperor.
- A NGC MS-66 Full Band & a PCGS MS 66 Proof US Mercury dime was circulated around to the members. It was interesting to see the difference between the two pieces.
- Another item shown was a recent Heritage Auctions Catalogue of Brazilian coinage and the Eric P. Newman Collection.

8) Windbreakers
The 60th Anniversary windbreakers have been received and they were passed out to the members in attendance.

Conclusion
Door prizes were drawn and the meeting was adjourned at 2015 hrs.

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Odd Man Out

By Marc Bink

The coin was brutally cleaned, very large and actually quite ugly. It was billed as being a fake, possibly a recent Chinese made copy. I had this "feeling" that it wasn't; it was just too crude and in essence too "period" to be a fake. The weight checked out within limits, and the sizing was bang-on. A tap against the table surface confirmed the coin "rang" like a hammered silver coin. Although the colour was slightly off, I decided I'd take a chance on it and buy it. It wasn't that it was going for a large sum of money, in fact it was cheaper than a 40 year old MS-65 cent would be, but why throw good money after bad? All I knew was that if I walked out with it, I would be the proud new owner of a 1662 "ducaton" from the oddly named state of the Spanish Netherlands. It didn't fit in my German thaler collection, but it was close enough to make it into the book. However, because of the colour it would stick out in the collection like a sore thumb. It would definitely appear as the odd-man-out. It had better be real…

The next thing I know, I bought the coin, and soon afterwards, the usual "buyer's remorse" set in. This usually occurs once the euphoria of the deal comes off, and responsibility sets back in. One begins to realize that it cost real money to get what could possibly be a fake. So the next order of business was to do some research. How do I know this thing is real? Is my hunch going to pay off? First off, what is a "ducaton", and where was the Spanish Netherlands?

It seems the area known then as the Spanish

Netherlands is now known primarily as Belgium and Luxembourg. The Spanish Hapsburgs controlled it from about 1556 until it was ceded to the Austrians in 1714. This same area was about where the trenches were during the First World War, so it seems the people here have had a long history of being besieged and overrun. The period of time when the Spanish ruled the area was no exception.

To start things off, the history of the Spanish Netherlands in itself is pretty short and not terribly important in itself. However, its place in history and what it cost is the real story here.

Spain started out controlling most of the Netherlands and the Low Countries, thanks to Carlos I of Hapsburg. Carlos (Charles V) had inherited a number of crowns due to some strategic family connections and was the Holy Roman Emperor. He was the most powerful man in Europe at the time. But it didn't seem to matter; there was always some group who had a beef with the ruling monarch, and before long, warfare would erupt, and borders would again change.

The 17th century was one of the most bloody in modern human history. War was regarded as a sport by most kings in this period, and as such, they were constantly fighting amongst themselves and laying waste to the countryside. All of Europe was one big battlefield in the 17th century. It did not bode well for any monarch not to be engaged in some sort of battle. It was seen as an affront to his manhood if he remained at peace too long.

In this case, the Dutch in the north were in the process of separating from the Spanish controlled south. Basically, what had happened was the Spanish imposed taxes and religious controls on the Protestants in the north, and a rebellion started under William of Orange. The Spanish needed these revenues to finance exploration in the New World, as well as to pay for all their European commitments. The English sided with the Dutch and drove the Spanish out of the north. By 1590, the northern part was pretty much on its own, and the southern part remained under Spanish control. The remaining provinces of Flanders and Brabant made up most of the Spanish Netherlands. Antwerp and Brussels were the two major cities in this region, and the mints for the Spanish Netherlands were situated there. Flemish art and architecture flourished during this period, which is surprising, considering that Flanders and Brabant were constantly beset by wars. Because Belgium is currently known for its chocolates and beer, it's probably no wonder why the Spanish fought to keep the south. But then again, the city of Limburg is also there, and it is known for a rather pungent and unpleasant cheese. There are no records of this type of cheese being used a secret weapon, although it probably could have been. Just imagine what a wheel of that stuff would smell like once tossed into an enclosed coach in the heat of summer.

The ducaton was made from about 1618 until 1695. As with all coins struck for the Spanish

The Three Graces, by Peter Paul Rubens, 1635
(image courtesy of Museo del Prado)

Netherlands, they were apparently crudely struck. A ducaton is essentially a thaler. The Spanish Netherlands had its own currency then that was unique unto itself. There are patagons and ducatons, each looking similar to the other but being of different weights. This one is confirmed as a ducaton and is KM-72.2.[1] To find a specimen in EF is very, very rare, and most are blundered and weakly struck. The specimen that I have has a lot of weak spots that never "struck up" properly. The coin also has a die rotation of about 25-30 degrees, and this indicates to me that it was probably hammered. There is some doubling on the legends which is consistent with the kind of "chattering" one gets when the coin is struck twice. The person holding on to the moving die inadvertently shifted after the first strike. The coin is not perfectly round either; it appears that it was hand-cut to control weight. It might have been mildly clipped, but the weight is too close to call. On hand-hammered planchets it was common to shave slivers off on overweight coins at the mint, so the marks here are not unusual. There are no mount marks apparent on this coin. What is unfortunate about my coin is that it was brutally cleaned fairly recently. A person can expect that most, if not all, medieval coins were subjected to a clean at some point in their history. It's just all the

1 George S. Cuhaj, editor and Thomas Michael, market, *Standard Catalog of World Coins, 17th Century, 1601-1700,* Third Edition (Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 2003).

Brussels, Belgium

more disconcerting if it was done recently. Cleaning coins is a very touchy subject. Until about 40 years ago, it was considered acceptable to clean up very tarnished coins. It was also perceived more presentable to look at clean, highly polished coins rather than drab dark ones. So people polished whole collections. Nowadays it seems that it is mostly kids who polish up low-grade silver and pennies in their date collections. The industry as whole, though, frowns heavily on cleaning. It is considered an absolute no-no, unless it is a recently recovered ancient coin from the dirt. Even then there are limits to how much one can clean off of a coin. The rule is to clean it up only enough to positively attribute it, no more. Nothing looks worse or more artificial than a 1700 year old Constantine bronze polished to an unhealthy pink.

Some people seem to believe that a good clean will actually reveal detail that has worn off. I just recently had an argument with an individual at the appraisal table at the last ENS coin show who thought he was a serious numismatist. That in itself is fine. A lot of us are struck with similar delusions of grandeur, myself included. But this guy had taken it to a whole different level. He showed up with some ancient Greek and Roman bronze coins that were all immaculately clean and showing no detail whatsoever. Any shot at a positive attribution had been obliterated by an ultrasonic bath or an electrolysis machine, both of which he had proudly claimed to use with a high degree of proficiency. All of the coins he had shown me were just misshapen lumps of highly polished bronze or copper which, when held at an angle to the light, insinuated that at one point in the distant past, there had been an effigy on it. He thought he was sitting on a million dollars and a major archeological find. He did have one rare Sestertius of Claudius, but it was so worn out and beaten up that it was next to impossible to discern which type it was. I was so appalled by this point that I kind of forgot all about public relations and political correctness and told him that he had totally wrecked a 400 dollar coin. He then proceeded to argue that in fact he had saved the coin by rendering it chemically inert and that the detail that was on the coin was actually visible when he pulled it out of the bath.

Having had plenty of experience with wrecking bronze coins in an electrolysis bath myself, I tried to explain to him that struck brass is much like the steel on a Japanese Samurai sword - it actually consists of multiple layers and that the oxide formed is actually stable, and it then, much like rock does to a fossil, displaces the actual metal. The detail layer is part of this, particularly

with 2000 year old brass. This is the main reason why super-detailed brown bronzes are worth a lot more than green ones - the brown ones are still active brass metal and not inert powdery bronze oxide. He just wouldn't listen; it didn't help that he had brought along an entourage of disciples who probably were more than a little amused watching their master get schooled. We agreed to disagree. This allowed him to save face, and as a concession, I deemed the coins as "BU". Normally, that term means "Brilliant Uncirculated", but in this case, I meant "Brutally Used" or "Bloody Ugly". I didn't tell him that. His pride salvaged, he and his entourage walked away happy.

The point here is that invariably coins are ruined when they are brutally cleaned. The overall value of the coin drops by at least one grade but more often two grades when it is cleaned. Since silver is a pretty soft metal, it tends to wear down quickly. Striking plate silver with a hammer sort of anneals it and case-hardens it. This is why wear patterns actually appear as a different colour when held up at an angle to a good light. The problem with hammered coins is of course the uneven strike, which causes this annealing process to be ineffectual in some places and harder and stronger in others along the same planchet. A good polish will actually take away areas of detail that might have survived, even if they were black. Due to the inherent activity of the metal (it's still oxidizing), re-toning might bring some of this back, because the coin will tone along the annealed areas and be lighter in other areas, and as such, more detail will be apparent. This by no means an exact science, in fact, it's hit and miss. So re-toning a polished silver coin is worth the risk; the question remains how this is best achieved. There are some in our club that know how to do this, but I don't. One of these days, I'm going to have to learn. I've tried with minimal success using sulphur, but the results looked artificial. My ducaton will be meeting with one of these esteemed gentlemen, who know how to re-tone a coin, shortly. Disclaimer: Just be advised that re-toning coins can be considered borderline, unethical and can be viewed as fraud. But I don't want to re-tone the coin to a beautiful rainbow of colours for any kind of financial gain, I'd just be happy if it wasn't so shiny and was returned to a dull and drab shade of grey more befitting its age. As it is now, there's no way this coin could ever be certified, re-toned or polished. An expert grader will be able to determine if a coin has been cleaned and re-toned. Any treatment done to it will take a few years to settle in and correct. Keep that in mind, if you are planning to do one.

Spanish Netherlands Brabant Ducation , KM 72.1

So my poor ducaton has been brutally cleaned, which has exposed all of its striking faults as well as the high wear points. The shield and the coat-of-arms on the reverse are barely visible. The coin looks like it was poorly struck to begin with, worn down a bit, and then any fine detail that might have still been there was obliterated by a recent run-in with some paste silver polish. Philip IV appears a little careworn and threadbare; half of his armour is missing on his right shoulder. The hair on the back of his head is missing. I'm not sure if he has a goatee or if that's his chin; he is a Hapsburg, so in all likelihood it's actually his chin. A check of a painting done of him confirms that the likeness on my coin is probably pretty accurate. He was an ugly guy with a huge lower lip and protruding chin in the best Hapsburg fashion.

A further check of a contemporary source from my library more or less confirms what modern scholarship thinks of the man and the country

at the time. He is regarded in Peter Heylyn's *A Little Description of the Great World*, Sixth Edition (1633) as being shrewd, devious and fairly astute. Heylyn also claims, "Yet had our late Queene followed the counsel of her men of warre, she might haue broken it to pieces. With 4000 men, she might haue taken away his Indies from him: without whose gold, the lovv country army, vvhich is his very best, could not be paid, and so must needes be dissolved." And therein lies the rub for our Spanish conquered Low Countries - they were very expensive to maintain. Economically, they weren't delivering much back to the Spanish crown. Certainly, there were areas in the Spanish Netherlands that weren't doing too badly. Brabant was one of them. It was experiencing everything the Renaissance had to offer. Culturally, the "court of the archdukes" offered the world a great deal in terms of art; Peter Paul Reubens came from and worked there. Erasmus had hung around a lot there earlier on in the Spanish regime. The Spanish Netherlands had quite a large degree of autonomy within the Spanish crown, but that wasn't good enough for its enemies. The fledgling Dutch kingdom under William of Orange had some desires on the area. And then there were the French; they wanted to expand their empire. Louis XIII always needed money, and he regarded war as a pursuit of pleasure for kings. So he had no trouble stirring things up. Nor did his successor Louis XVI later on in the century. And guess where the primary battlefields ended up being - that's right, the Spanish Netherlands. Since the area was constantly at war, there were a lot of hungry and disgruntled armies and soldiers loitering around. They needed money and food. Heylyn noted that the cost of maintaining these provinces was slowly hemorrhaging the Spanish treasury. Later events would eventually prove him right.

No Date, Spanish Netherlands Tournai Ducation , KM 50

By the time this coin was struck, some 30 years after Heylyn's book, the Spaniards were forced to retreat and retrench, and they were broke. First, the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 created a shell republic, recognized by all but tolerated by none, and then by 1659, the provinces of Cambrai and Artois were ceded to France. One can imagine that once the beer in Artois from Leuven was gone, the fighting spirit left the Spaniards, and the other provinces were absorbed by either the Dutch or the French, pretty much setting the future kingdom of Belgium up on the ethnic lines it currently enjoys today.

And how did Philip IV figure in this? Who was he? Well, first off, he was the King of Spain. He was born in 1605 and ascended the throne of Spain, Portugal, Piombino and Artois in 1621. For a few years, he ruled over a vast empire. It was largely financed by looting the recently discovered and conquered Americas. Silver had been found in Peru, and soon, large fleets of ships were filled with gold and silver plundered from the new world. Most of this gold and silver would find its way out of the Spanish treasury into the hands of private merchants in Amsterdam. Poor Philip never knew what hit him. His situation was akin to the poor sailor who is forced to sit in a slowly sinking lifeboat with only a teacup with which to bail.

This was what most scholars thought up until recently. Nowadays, Philip has been somewhat rehabilitated. He tried to fix things, but by the time he got to the throne, certain things in Spanish life and culture had been ingrained and weren't about to change. One was a cumbersome nobility; there were a lot of princes and dukes that owed their allegiance to the Kings of Castile, but there also were a lot of agendas too. Certain people had to be paid, allegiances had to be promised and daughters needed to be married off. This was the time of Don Quixote, and it seems that the overriding message in the story applied to real life too. The nobility sat on its ass, while others died to fight for it, and the whole thing was a comedy of errors and false pretenses. Spain had set itself up to fail, and while Philip was on the throne, the rot had set in and entrenched itself, but it wouldn't be apparent for at least another 100 years. At the time, everyone thought that the Spanish were the ones to beat. So they all took turns beating them, and Philip, to his credit, kept on trying to win things back and turn the tide, although failing miserably each time. When Philip died in 1665, there was nothing left in Europe except for a sliver of land around Brabant. Just the foreign domains remained, and those were being challenged by an increasingly powerful British Royal Navy.

While his armies were getting clobbered in the field, Philip celebrated the arts. He was a devotee of the theatre and was considered by all to be the very model of a Baroque king. He was regal, impassive and "correct" in his dealings with people. His own ministers saw him as aloof. But then again, he had a right to be. His personal life was a stark contrast to the regal one. He was considered a warm and passionate person with a sense of humour. He apparently was a good father. And like most royals in that period, marriage vows didn't mean much to him. He took numerous mistresses and fathered a number of children out of wedlock.

His foreign policies and the wars he fought were a different matter. He ruled pretty much throughout the whole of the "30 Years War" which was a major upheaval in Europe. He also came out on the losing side of it; sort of. At first it didn't seem that way. The wars against the Dutch were going in his favor in the 1620s, and he was keeping the French in check. Then in 1634, things started to change. The "Netherlands First" policies that he had been championing were superseded, once the French got involved. In 1635, they went at it, and in the beginning, it looked like the Spanish were going to persevere. This whole war dragged on until the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. By that time Philip was desperate to quit. He had lost a lot, and he was beginning to realize that the treasury was just

Don Gaspar de Guzmán (1587–1645), Count-Duke of Olivares Velázquez (Diego Rodríguez de Silva y Velázquez) (Spanish, Seville 1599–1660 Madrid); oil on canvas.

about bare. Like Heylyn predicted, he needed the Indies and the Americas more than he needed a very expensive army in the Netherlands. So he married his daughter off to Louis XIV and called it quits. He was dead six years later.

Internally, Philip had some interesting problems as well. He allowed court favorites to influence him and direct policy, much to his detriment. The first of these was Count-Duke of Olivares, Gaspar de Guzman (1587-1645). Olivares was the prime architect of the "Netherlands First" policy. He tried to hold things together but eventually couldn't. His crushing workload contributed to sleep disorders and eventually mental illness to the point where the king then seized powers and ruled by committee, trying[2] to turn things around. Part of the problems that both faced was the inactivity and sense of entitlement the military had. Appointments were made on a basis of money and rank; they had nothing to do with ability. And then there was the navy or Armada. It had never quite gotten over the fact that a bunch of tiny, under-armed, barnacle infested and cobbled together,

2 This where the term "junta" comes from. Apparently the first committees Philip set up were called juntas.

Picture depicting a late medieval mint utilizng the hammering process. The individual on the left is trimming excess metal off of struck coins, centre is flattening metal into a planchet, and on the right is striking coins.

but ably led, English ships had beaten the largest navy ever assembled back in 1588. So the budget for the navy kept spiraling out of control. As the 1630s progressed, not only would the English have to be contended with, so would the French. It was getting increasingly difficult to get ships back to Spain. So when the whole treasure fleet was captured by the Dutch in 1628, the Spanish did what they wanted to do the previous year. They defaulted on their loans to Genoese bankers and declared bankruptcy. It didn't go well for them. Now, no one in Europe would lend them any money, and soon, Philip was forced to spend even more to get silver and plunder from America. And to top it all off, there was that uniquely Spanish way of doing business; graft and corruption. Heylyn makes mention of this in his book, but then again, he has nothing nice to say about anybody except the English. The problem was a lot of money was disappearing through corruption. Philip and Olivares tried to stop it but ultimately failed. In fact, the money pinch had grown so large that Philip and Olivares were forced to sell off titles and feudal rights just to off-set even higher tax increases and to try and take the pressure off of Castile. There were a number of internal revolts as a result, one of them ultimately costing the Portuguese crown.

So it was into this atmosphere my ducaton was made. Basically, it was the precursor to the downfall of an empire. It also explains a few things about the coin. Most societies that are in the process of any kind of upheaval, be it political or war, tend to let the standards of their coinage drop. The Spanish Netherlands was no exception. Almost from its inception, the country was at war. The screw press was just being introduced into some of the more progressive and affluent societies at that time. France had one working in Paris, and there were others working in Germany. The English had just started going away from the hammer after two previously unsuccessful attempts. The first "milled" English general issues had been made in 1664-65. So to see a hammer still being used in Brabant was no real surprise, especially with a government more concerned with fighting a losing war than making pretty coins. This coin has all the proper attributes; it's crude, it's irregular, and it's badly struck. There's some doubling going on, as the hammer undoubtedly slipped after the first blow. A few years ago, the Edmonton Numismatic Society had a demonstration of coin hammering at one of its shows. It took a great deal of force to strike a small ball of silver into a denari-sized coin. It was hit twice. I know, because I swung the hammer. The strike I got out of it was pretty good, and the

trusting gentleman who held the moving die was pretty good and almost deaf. So I have an idea what the situation in a working mint would have been like. These ducatons were hammered into a silver plate instead of a ball. The plate was hand-cut into as close to a circle as possible with snips and then placed into the anvil. Due to the irregular flan, it was sometimes forced with a tap or two from the hammer. Then, it was hit and then, once again. The person holding the moving die was probably deaf, scared and drunk when this was going on. Then, there was a quota too; a certain amount of coins had to be struck in a given day. The idea here was that hammerers were much faster, more precise and could make more coins faster than a screw press ever could. It's quite evident that my coin was struck in a hurry. According to Davenport, *World Crowns and Thalers*, all coins from the four mints of the Spanish Netherlands were crude and poorly struck. These mints were located in Antwerp, Maastricht, Hertogenbosch and in Brussels. The "angel-face" on my coin indicates it was struck in Brussels. The other mint marks are listed in the Krause catalog. Unfortunately, the catalog is short on facts, such as how the currency worked, or what denominations the coins were equal to. There's only a basic history listed there, but the map is pretty good, all things considered. The pictures of the coins themselves could be better too. Maybe they've been improved in the latest edition of the catalog. All in all, it was not that easy to figure out what it was that I was looking at, and it wound up that I confirmed it by locating other pictures online as well as in Davenport's book.

A lot of these coins have come up for auction, so they aren't necessarily rare. Prices for them aren't that hot either. So as far as collectability is concerned, they aren't as appreciated as other coins from that period are. I think that is largely because no one has ever heard of the Spanish Netherlands except for some Dutch, Belgians and Spanish who learned of it in history class in school. As is typically the case with those of us who went through the North American school system, which doesn't teach any history, I had never heard of it before, until I started researching the coin.

The history of the Netherlands or the Low Countries is very interesting and diverse. This was just a small chapter of it. When most of us look at a map of Europe today, we see relatively stable and civilized countries who all get along. What we don't appreciate is that this wasn't the case before 1945. It's hard to imagine that just a short 65 years ago, Europe was finally starting to end the constant cycle of wars and bloodbaths that had been an integral part of its history for centuries. And as is almost always the case, a coin from an almost forgotten interlude in history can set one off on a journey that starts in a small place but soon expands to the bigger picture. The benefits of this kind of a journey through time are a wider and larger understanding of how and why things are the way they are in this century.

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Another Syracusian Tetradrachm

By Terence Cheesman

From 413B.C. to approximately 400 B.C., the mint of Syracuse produced some of the most beautiful coins ever minted. These designs have been copied or adapted by other mints, both in antiquity as well as more modern times. However, it would seem that the spectacular run of tetradrachms ended at this point, not to be resumed for about eighty years. This does not mean that the mint was silent. Smaller silver and gold coins continued to be struck along with large numbers of base metal coinages. This sudden outpouring of coinage seems to be the by-product of the great victory over the Athenians in 413 B.C. An Athenian army and navy had tried for two years to besiege Syracuse and were utterly defeated with most of that force either killed or captured and then enslaved.

Another by-product of that war was the entrance of the North African city state Carthage into Sicilian politics, which led to the almost constant state of war with Syracuse and her allies on one side and Carthage on the other. The Carthaginians seemed to be capable of destroying Syracuse and conquering the island but were constantly foiled by a succession of military adventurers leading what were generally mercenary armies. Unlike today, most ancient armies were made up of mercenaries. It is true that many of these soldiers for hire were very skilled at what they did, but the principle reason was economic.You only had to pay mercenaries when you were actually using them, which brings us to our featured coin.

Agathocles was one of these mercenary commanders. Unlike most of them he actually spent his early life living in Syracuse. He was an officer in the army and was banished twice for trying to overthrow the government. In 317 B.C., he returned at the head of a 10,000 man mercenary army. Apparently, he and this force were let into the city after swearing a solemn oath to respect the constitution. On the surface this looks like a remarkably stupid thing to do - inviting 10,000 heavily armed men into your city, none of whom have any loyalty to its citizens. However, this probably has something to do with the insanely lethal world of civic politics in Syracuse, a world which makes the current political

situation in the U.S. look like child's play. Less than a hundred years before, the Democratic faction in Syracuse was working hand in glove with the Athenian besiegers to force the city's surrender. Once inside, Agathocles promptly forgot his oath, seized power and got his political house in order by murdering or banishing some 10,000 Syracusans.

Mind you, a large factor in this pogrom was that Agathocles had to provide for this massive army that brought him into power, and he needed cash. The wealth of the citizens he murdered or banished would provide that. So it was probably at this time that the first tetradrachm issue was struck. It is a beautiful coin and in keeping with the traditional motifs of the coins of Syracuse. On the obverse is an impressive portrait of the goddess Persephone. She can only be distinguished from the earlier portraits of Arethusa by the presence of a wreath made up of wheat stalks. Around her head, four dolphins swim. The reverse features a quadriga at the point when the driver is beginning to stop the galloping horses. The image is quite dramatic and in keeping with the finest quality of Syracusan numismatic art. Above this image is placed a triskeles which is a symbol with three llegs and was the symbol of Sicily. If anyone needed any clearer proof of Agathokes's intentions it was this. Agathocles wished to become king of Sicily.

Unfortunately, this involved another war with Carthage. Again, it seems to be remarkably stupid to go to war with a city that always seems to come within a hair's breadth of conquering the entire island for itself, but that is exactly what happened with the usual predictable results. Agathocles, who started the war in 311 managed

to defeat the Carthaginians but himself was defeated and forced to endure another siege of the city of Syracuse (310 B.C.). He managed to break out and invade North Africa, enjoyed some success and was again crushingly defeated in 307 B.C. By 306 B.C., both he and the Carthaginians seemed to have enough of this war, and a peace treaty was signed more or less returning everything back to when the war got started. It would seem at this time, at least to modern scholarship, that new coin types were introduced. The obverse featured an image of Kore, which is another name for the goddess Persephone, who in this case would be the goddess of spring harvests. Unlike previous depictions, the image faces right with her hair combed back and tied in a loose pony tail. In keeping with her agricultural dominion, she is wreathed in wheat. The dolphins, a traditional motif on a Syracusan coin which have surrounded the head of the deity since almost the beginning of the tetadrachm coinage, have been removed. Instead, the name of the goddess ΚΟΡΑΣ (Kore) was placed on the coins.

The reverse features the goddess Nike in the act of erecting a trophy. To commemorate a victory on land or sea, the victorious Greeks would drive a post into the ground and dress it with the arms and armour of the defeated enemy. The trophy had to be left alone and could not be torn down. Only when the structure had rotted away could anything be done about it. On the coin, Nike can be seen with a hammer in her right hand, and with her left hand, she is positioning a nail so she can drive it into the side of a helmet. In the right field is a triskeles. The inscription ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ (Agathokles) is found in the left field. Also in the left field, below the image of Nike, one finds the monogram AN. The design of the reverse was extremely successful and was copied by both the Greeks and later the Romans. This coinage seems to have three main issues: the first featured in this article and the second a much cruder issue often associated with the invasion by Agathocles into North Africa. However, it is more likely that this coinage was minted in Sicily, possibly by the Carthaginians in Sicily or by a branch mint controlled by Agathocles, but we cannot be sure.

The third type is the rarest and is difficult to place within the series. The principle design is the same, but the difference is that the inscription for Kore has been replaced with the legend ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ (of the Syracusians). The two most likely dates of issue are either 307 to 306, and thus would represent a transitional coinage, or it is posthumous. Agathocles died in 289 perhaps of throat cancer. The population of Syracuse immediately drove out the rest of his family and established a short lived democracy. This coin could have been minted during this period. The reverse still features the inscription naming Agathokles, but the design may have been frozen.

The coinage of Agathocles represents a bridge between the early coins minted at Syracuse to those that followed. Though the career of Agathocles seems to consist of escaping the jaws of one disaster only to march into the jaws of another, most of his coins are struck to an extremely high level of numismatic art. His coinage was innovative. Though some designs simply copied what had been done before, most did not, and some designs became the template for other coinages, often minted a great distance away. Whatever one could say about the man, one is forced to admire his coins

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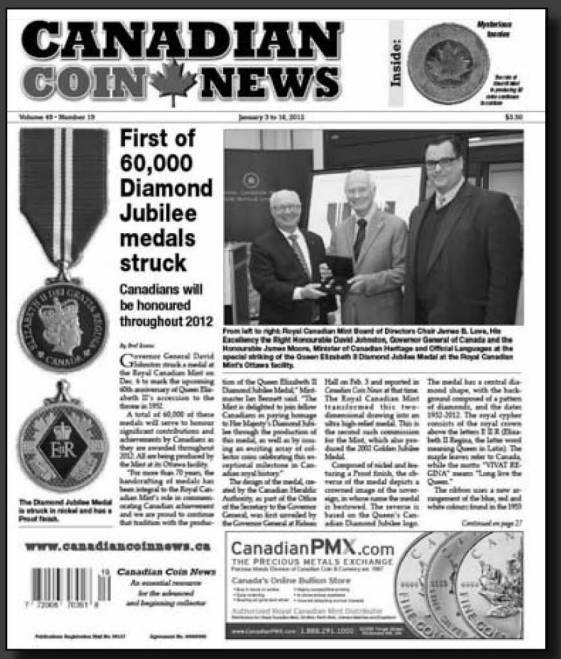
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A Sense of History:
Coin Types in the Greek Era

By Wayne Hansen

'Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy an ancient Greek coin, which is pretty much the same thing'.

Paraphrase of quote that I saw recently in a Cornwall chocolate shop.

It is something of a curse to have a good sense of time passing, especially if it is passing you by in life's great rush. On the other hand, it is a gift to have an interest in and appreciation of history – the events of earlier ages now brought to life. There are those among us who do not have a great sense of history. I am reminded of the clueless tourist who was visiting Windsor Castle and was very impressed with its immense scale, solid construction and fine artworks. "But why," he asked the tour guide, "did they build it so close to Heathrow airport?" The guide no doubt didn't bother explaining that Windsor Castle was built just after the Norman invasion, 800 years before the airplane was even invented.

It is in this context, the context of history as a series of passing events and their resultant consequences, that I thought I might provide a few comments on the broad types of ancient Greek coinage – coins from the time they were first developed in 650 BC to the time they were displaced by Roman expansion five centuries later. Even within that modest time-span, a tremendous amount of history occurred, marked by wars, mass migration, political drama and national upheavals. These events, along with the natural evolution of numismatic art and manufacture, resulted in periodic changes to the way coins were designed and struck. It was an important era when the technology was new and experiments were made. I will show a few coins from my collection to illustrate.

Introduction

The invention of coinage marked a significant advance in ancient civilization. Coins did not spring up fully-fledged, however, nor did progress always occur in a straight line. The concept started with the making of uniform lumps of precious metal so that their weight could be predicted for the storage or exchange of wealth. The first pre-coins were indeed just lumps, or slightly modified

lumps, of electrum. In later developments, the lumps were struck and increasingly flattened, while an identifying design was placed on one or both sides. Other metals were then used to make these flattened lumps, and the complexity of coin designs evolved - not only to reflect the identity of the owner and the community, but to reflect conquest, power and vanity. Along the way, ancient minting communities and kingdoms became more prosperous and wanted to communicate their heightened aesthetic sense by producing increasingly elaborate and artistic coin offerings.

The following sections briefly describe the main stages and characteristics of ancient Greek coinage. These are my own casual interpretations based on random exposure to the topic. The usual coin categorization simply includes the three broad periods of 'archaic', 'classical' and 'Hellenistic", but I have chosen to identify two sub-categories within each era based on whether the coin was minted by a specific city-state or a regal authority. I have also attached a crude dating guideline to each main category for general reference, knowing that there will be conflicts and overlaps (hopefully the full-patch club members among us will not insist on pistols at dawn for some transgression in this regard). Be warned, this kind of knowledge could make you dangerous.

A. Archaic Period (650-480 BC)

Typical Archaic Features:
- Globular, Thick Flan or Flattened Flan
- Round to Irregular Flan Shape
- Incuse Punch or Incuse Die Reverse
- Plain Surface or Simple Designs in Geometric/Archaic Style
- Precious Metal

The start of the world's first true coin production, around 650 BC, marked the beginning of the archaic period in Greek coinage (although the first coins were not strictly Greek). The first coins were indeed lumps of metal that were given a specific weight and identified with a crude punch*. From this simplest of beginnings, the notion of coinage spread quickly to other centers, and the complexity of production increased. Although more elaborate punches were devised, and designs were added to the obverse, it is the presence of an incuse punch reverse that defines the archaic period. It wasn't until the time that Persia was defeated in its second invasion of the Greek mainland in 480 BC that the archaic era came to a close. With Persia weakened, the power of the Greek cities around the Mediterranean and the power of the Macedonian Kingdom increased markedly. After 480, coin design styles began to change, and the two-sided coin format became standard.

Only gold, silver and electrum were used in coin production in the archaic period, except for an isolated use of billon silver on the island of Lesbos. Bronze coinage did not start until the classical period.

(* Purists might say that true coinage started when the precise lumps were stamped with identifiable types assigned to a city or ruler, but this seems to be a denial of ancient intent. I refer to the earliest category with the simple punch reverse as 'proto-coins' meaning 'first coins'.)

A-1. Archaic Proto/Dynastic Coins

The really early coins were monumental in concept but relatively small and crude in manufacture. They could be termed as 'dynastic/pre city-state' since they were issued by tribal rulers in less developed, non-Greek chiefdoms, where the people lived in smaller settlements rather than cities. It was the dynastic ruler who gathered the wealth and issued the coins. The first coins were issued around 650 BC in southwestern Asia Minor, likely in or around landlocked Sardis, the capitol of the Lydian Kingdom. There is some debate about whether gold or electrum was first used for true coins (those with a defined weight and simple punch reverse), but the electrum alloy is generally favored – if only because it was harder to cut up for change, and because it has survived in quantity. Konuk notes that coinage was invented precisely because the value of the naturally variable electrum alloy had to be guaranteed for transactions.

The first coins were globular in form with a rough, square punch on the reverse and a plain or striated obverse. A short time later, the punches became more elaborate, and simple designs were placed on the coin's obverse, ranging from geometric patterns to plant or animal forms. With more force required in the striking, the globular coin became somewhat flattened on the obverse side. Towards the middle of the earliest period, King Kroisos (Croesus to Latin speakers) began minting various separate denominations of gold and silver coins at Sardis, with similar obverse designs on each (lion and bull confronted). Although electrum was still used in isolated spots for centuries, gold and silver issues then became the norm for mints in almost all Asia Minor and in Greek territories. The precious metal content made the coins too expensive for normal transactions. Other silver

dynastic coinages, notably in Lycia and Thraco-Macedon, followed the Kroisid coins in the 6th century, but the use of gold was rare outside the expanded Persian Empire until the classical era, when Philip II of Macedon began to exercise his imperial ambitions (after 350 BC). Later in the archaic time frame, various Greek or tribal initials were sometimes added to one face of the coin to identify the issuing dynast.

Archaic/Proto Dynastic Coins:

- *Flan - Very Small to Medium Size, Plain Globular Flan or Globular Flan with Flattened Obverse*
- *Metal - Electrum, Gold or Silver*
- *Obverse - Plain/No Die, or Die with Simple Design*
- *Reverse - Simple Incuse Punch(es) or Larger Incuse with Design*

Figure 1 - Archaic Proto/Dynastic Coins

1A:
Ionia, EL 1/12 Stater (Hemihekte)
O-Plain / R-Punch with bumps
650-600 BC; 7.6m/1.16g

1B:
Ionia, EL 1/24 Stater
O-Striated / R-Decorated punch
650-600 BC; 5.0m/0.56g

1C:
Ephesos, EL 1/3 Stater (Trite)
O-Geometric / R-Geometric punch
650-600 BC; 12.0m/4.65g

1D:
Lycian Dynast, AR Stater
O-Boar head / R-Punch with crane
520-500 BC; 19.5/8.93g

A-2. Archaic City-State Coins

Some archaic coinages were specifically associated with individual towns or cities. With increasing population and wealth from produce and trade, once small settlements became towns, and towns became cities. With a ready supply of local or imported precious metal, the prosperous town or city could strike its own emblematic coins. In the archaic period, the fabric of the civic coinage was similar to the dynastic coinages, except the obverse displayed a prominent city emblem. Strangely, this emblem often didn't present a patron civic deity. Instead, it often took the form of a mythical creature or natural object, similar to many of the non-civic coins at this time. The obverse designs were strikingly archaic in form, especially regarding the posing and modeling of figures.

The reverse of these coins continued to be created by some form of incuse punch, ranging from a simple square to a larger punch containing a special

design or shape. As with the dynastic coinages, the archaic city coins only occasionally added a brief legend or text to identify the issuing city.

Examples of archaic civic coinage are much less common than examples of such coins from the classical period. Cities in Asia Minor, Greece, northern Greece, the Greek islands, southern Italy, and Sicily minted these archaic coins. Examples are Sinope and Kaunos in Asia Minor, Athens and Thebes in Greece, Aigina in the Greek islands, and Syracuse in Sicily. A special note has to be made about archaic civic coins in south Italy. Several Greek cities there experimented with large, spread, incuse coins from 550 to 510 BC that were among the first silver coins in Europe. In addition to being rather advanced in fabric and archaic style, the coins also automatically sported their city name, so they were very sophisticated for the time (see my article in *The Planchet*, 'A Tale of Three Cities', Dec 2012).

Archaic City-State Coins:

- *Flan - Large to Small Size, Globular or Flattened Flan*
- *Metal - Electrum, Silver or Billon Silver*
- *Obverse - Die with Bold, Archaic Civic Design*
- *Reverse - Incuse Punch(es) with Archaic / Geometric Design*

Figure 2 - Archaic City-State Coins

2A:
Sybaris, AR Nomos
O-Bull standing / R-Same incuse
530-510 BC; 28.5m/7.47g

2B:
Selinos, AR Didrachm
O-Selinon leaf / R-Geometric punch
520-490 BC; 22.0m/8.57g

2C:
Apollonia Pontika, AR Drachm
O-Anchor and shrimp
R-Swastika punch with dolphins
470-450 BC; 15.2m/3.41g

2D:
Thasos, AR Stater
O-Satyr running carrying nymph
R-Square punch
500-480 BC; 21.9m/9.70g

B. Classical Period (480-323 BC)

Typical Classical Features:
- Flattened, modestly sized flan
- Full Dies, obverse and reverse
- Fairly regular shape
- More design innovation/refinement
- Classic artistic style
- Standardized imperial types
- Regal or civic reverse legend
- Precious metal and bronze

The classical period began when the mainland Greeks defeated the attempted Persian invasion in 480 BC. Persia kept its Asia Minor territory, but it was much weakened, allowing all Greek cities outside the Persian sphere, plus the Macedonian Kingdom north of Greece, to grow and prosper unimpeded. Even the Greek cities in Asia Minor were able to operate somewhat independently under decentralized Persian rule. Greater prosperity and increased trade required more coinage, which in turn provided more opportunities for coin development. Besides trade, coins were needed to pay for the many wars and skirmishes that erupted around this time in the eastern and western Mediterranean. These wars occurred not only among sister Greek cities within Greece and Sicily, but also between eastern Greek colonies and Carthage in Sicily, and between western Greek cities and Macedon in Greece. Eventually, the Greek cities and Carthage shared different parts of Sicily, and Macedon basically dominated but didn't occupy the weakened cities in Greece. Under Alexander the Great, Macedon forcefully subdued Asia Minor and the Middle East in 334 BC, wiping away the remnants of the Persian Empire and establishing a unifying imperial order in the newly conquered eastern territories.

For the reasons noted, the number of minting cities, and the quantities of coins issued, increased substantially in the classical era. Improvements were made in both the art and science of coin production. There was a specific move away from archaic, chunky, awkwardly posed forms to more natural designs. Gods and other figures were shown with human features in a classic, elegant style that mirrored Greek sculpture at the time. Classical period coins also typically featured the name of the issuing city or issuing ruler, in Greek letters (full or abbreviated), either on the obverse for a city name or on the reverse for a ruler. Coin flans became thinner, and the flan perimeter became more circular to accommodate the wider obverse and reverse dies. At least one side of classical coins represented the main patron god, goddess or hero of the city or ruler.

The classical period technically lasted until the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. All of Alexander's lifetime imperial coins are considered classical since they still displayed restrained classical qualities (even if the style became somewhat eastern in character in some of the many local mints). Alexander drastically changed the nature of coinages in the whole eastern Mediterranean when he invaded Asia Minor a decade before his death. He suspended the established Persian satrapal and city-state issues in the conquered areas in favor of his uniform, imperial/regal Macedonian coinage (based on a pattern established by his father, Philip II). His main imperial denominations were the silver tetradrachm of Herakles and the gold stater of Apollo, which were minted using the Athenian weight standard and which were affixed with Alexander's name. These same coin types were issued by most of the major coin producing centers in Alexander's new empire, from Amphipolis in Macedon to Memphis in Egypt.

Beyond Alexander's empire, many of the Greek centers in Greece and in the western Mediterranean (including Italy and Sicily) maintained their city-state coinage issues in classical style, with some relaxation of design standards, for a century or two after the classical period. They continued issuing these coins until they were overrun by the Romans. It is worth noting that mints on the Greek mainland and to the west were much more subdued after the rise of Macedon, however, Alexander's mints in Asia continued to produce massive quantities of coins, before and after Alexander's death, with the great amount of captured Persian bullion.

Although the use of electrum for coins persisted in parts of Asia Minor (hektes anyone?), silver was the primary coinage metal in the classical period. Silver was used for the vast numbers of tetradrachms and the multitude of sub-denominations that were essential to the ancient economy. Gold was also essential for the minting of the large numbers of premium gold coins needed by the three Mediterranean empires in the 4th century BC, including the 'Great King' darics of Persia, the 'Apollo' staters of Macedon and the 'Tanit' staters of Carthage.

A major addition to the range of metals used for coin production occurred around 450 BC in Sicily, when bronze was employed to replace the impossibly small silver denominations with a larger format coin. Bronze was first cast in Akragas, but soon after, many Greek, Macedonian and Carthaginian cities were striking bronze coins along

with coins in other metals. The discussion below is sub-divided into two sections, again based on whether the classical coins were struck by a city-state or a by a specific ruler.

B-1. Classical City-State Coins

Although Persian satraps continued to dominate some cities in Asia Minor that minted coins after 480 BC (see below), other Greek cities under their nominal control could still often mint their own coins. On the Greek mainland and elsewhere in the 'Greek' world, a large number of minting cities (from Carthage and Magna Graecia to the Black Sea and Phoenicia, but excluding imperial Macedon) produced coins with civic characteristics. In addition to the civic emblem or badge on the obverse, a short or long version of the city's name in Greek letters was usually attached to the reverse die. Two special cases merit comment. First, by the start of the classical period, those sophisticated, archaic, incuse, spread-flan coins issued by cities in south Italy were reduced in size to match the normal classical format of other cities in the vicinity (again, see 'A Tale of Three Cities'). Second, the prolific and popular Athena/standing owl tetradrachm issues of Athens, which peaked in the latter 5th century, retained the largely archaically-styled Athena head as its obverse design until a slightly updated style was introduced around 350 BC (that is, toward the end of the classical period). Even in the photos shown in Figure 3 below, you can see that another city-state, Aigina, retained a form of archaic punch for its early classical period tortoise staters. This indicates that some cities did not want to tamper too much with an accepted style, but also that the styles of coinage did not change in all places at once (in the case of Aigina, the city was conquered by Athens in 456 BC, so it never got a chance to issue new coin types, however I see the late punch as an epigraphical form of the city name so it is evolutionary).

Figure 3 - Classical City-State Coins

3A:
Aigina, AR Stater
O-Tortoise / R-Epigraphical punch
457-431 BC; 21.3m/12.26 g

3B:
Thebes, AR Stater
O-Beoetian shield / R-Urn; ΚΑΛΛΙ
395-338 BC; 21.8m/12.07g

3C:
Korkyra, AR Stater
O-Cow with calf; ship prow
R-Stellate pattern; rudder; ΚΟΡ
400-350 BC; 21.3m/10.70g

3D:
Syracuse, AR Tetradrachm
O-Quadriga; Nike flying; sea monster
R-Head Arethusa; dolphins; ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ
450-440 BC; 24.5m/17.39g

It is worth noting that tyrants controlled several cities in the 'Greek' world at times in the classical 5th-4th centuries - including Athens in Greece and Syracuse in Sicily. Even so, the coinage issued by these tyrants was civic in nature, as opposed to the imperial or personal issues of other regimes, as noted in section B-2 below. Basically, the features of almost all coins produced between 480 and 323 BC, outside areas directly controlled by the Persian Empire, the Macedonian Empire and possibly the extended territory of the Carthaginians, resemble classical city-state coinages.

It is in the early classical era that the coins of Sicily, and the city of Syracuse in particular, became extraordinarily innovative. The artistry and the execution of coinage by several of these Sicilian Greek city-states reached a numismatic pinnacle in the latter 5th century BC, led by Syracuse. Syracuse had minted archaic tetradrachms and smaller denominations before 500 BC, but it performed sweeping design innovations to its coinage over the few decades after 460 BC. It did this at a time when it was controlled by tyrants and during a period of great conflict with neighboring city-states. Of course greater conflict required more coins and more die production, allowing for more innovation. Although the types on the Syracusian coinage remained much the same, the design of the components (especially the portrait of Arethusa/Persephone on the reverse) evolved quickly from archaic forms to high classical and beyond. A few of its celators were so accomplished as master engravers that they signed some of their dies. Around 406-405 BC, Syracuse began minting an extensive series of decadrachms to display its stylistic prowess (decadrachms were very rare until then). About the same time, its celators reached a tremendous technical and aesthetic milestone, when they began carving the first three-quarter facing head tetradrachm dies (those dedicated to Arethusa/Persephone and Athena). This advance influenced the development of coin types and styles all over the Greek world, such that many more mints issued full-facing or three-quarter facing coins rather than the simple sideways portraits. The most common of the subsequent three-quarter facing silver issues were, and are, the drachms of Larissa. (Unfortunately I can't show you my Syracuse Euainetos decadrachms or my Eukleidas three-quarter facing Athena tetradrachm, since they are currently on loan to the Louvre … a simple case of bad timing.)

Classical City-State Coins:

- *Flan - Medium Size, Flat Both Sides*
- *Metal - Silver or Bronze*
- *Obverse - Full Die with God, Hero, or Natural/Mythical Creature*
- *Reverse - Full Die with Simple Design and Usual Civic Name*

B-2. Classical Regal or Imperial Coins

In the classical period, there were two main empires that issued definitive regal coinages – the Persian Empire in Asia Minor and the Middle East, and the Macedonian Empire under Philip II and Alexander the Great. Carthage also became an occupying power, and some of its coinage could be considered as imperial, employing the head of Tanit on the obverse plus the horse and palm tree of the mother city (it also sometimes issued localized coinages in its Sicilian territories).

While some Greek cities within the Persian Empire minted civic-type coins in the mid-5th century, after Persia's power had been reduced by war with Greece, a few of the Persian king's important satraps or governors in Asia Minor, including Mazaios, Balakros, Datames and Phanabazos, also issued their own interesting classical coinages from their regional capital cities. The satraps each devised distinctive eastern types for their coins and inscribed their own name, in Persian script, on the obverse or reverse dies without alluding to the Persian king (it is assumed however that they were minted under the auspices of the king). These unusual satrapal issues terminated when Macedon invaded.

The focus within Macedon itself had always been on the king and palace culture, rather than civic coin issues. The first king, Alexander I, produced his own coinage around the start of the classical period, mostly without a legend. His successors tended to attach their names to their coins, so they are easy to attribute. The Macedonian kingdom primarily used three mints, although the mints were never identified on the coins – first Aigai, then

Figure 4 - Classical Regal Coins

4A:
Artaxerxes - Persia, AR Siglos
O-King with spear & bow / R-Punch
Sardeis; 485-420 BC; 16.0m/5.48g

4B:
Philip II - Macedon, AV Stater
O-Head Apollo / R-Biga; Nike; ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ
Pella; 340-328 BC; 19.5m/8.80g

4C:
Mazaios - Persia, AR Stater
O-Baal, eagle, grapes, scepter; name
R-Lion attacking bull; name
Tarsos; 361-334 BC; 23.4m/10.77g

4D:
Alexander III - Macedon, AR Tetradrachm
O-Head Herakles in lion skin
R-Baal, eagle, trident; Β. ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ
Babylon; 325-323 BC; 26.8m/17.10g

Pella and Amphipolis. As Macedon expanded into the Persian territories, it recycled the former Persian mints and established many new mints to produce a full-scale imperial coinage in the name of 'ΑΛΕΞΑΝDROY', meaning 'of Alexander', without reference to being a king. The fabric and types of Alexander's coins were strictly controlled, though the early style of several of the Asia Minor mints was eastern rather than Greek. All imperial Alexander coins issued before Alexander's death in 323 BC are considered to be classical.

Gold began to be used extensively by the three main expansionist empires in the classical period, largely for wealth storage, propaganda and/or for militaristic purposes. The main denominations were the Persian daric, plus the Macedonian and Carthaginian gold staters. Gold staters of kings Philip II and Alexander III, with their superb classical style, became particularly abundant and revered in ancient times.

Classical Regal Coins:

- *Flan - Medium Size, Flat Both Sides*
- *Metal - Gold, Silver or Bronze*
- *Obverse - Full Die with Usual Head of God or Hero*
- *Reverse - Full Die with God or Regal Device and King's Name*

C. Hellenistic Period (323-150 BC)

Typical Hellenistic Features:

- Flattened to extremely flattened flan
- Full obverse and reverse dies
- Regular shape
- Classic to exaggerated artistic style
- More natural/sensitive to careless portrait/ figure rendition
- Regressive design/less refinement
- Proliferation of kingdoms
- Real time regal portraits
- Regal legends or civic symbols/legends on reverse
- Precious metal and bronze

Alexander's classical eastern imperial coinages evolved further in the decades after his death, as his empire fragmented into smaller kingdoms and as more flamboyant design sensibilities took hold. Alexander's Macedonian successors (Philip III, Kassander, Ptolemy, Lysimachos and Seleukos) initially produced their own versions of Alexander's standard coin types - mostly with Alexander's name still appended, but also sometimes with their own names in its place (in the case of Philip III, Lysimachos and Seleukos). Later, by around 300 BC, the successors had decided to issue their own coins entirely, including newly created obverse/ reverse devices and again their own name. Inter-Macedonian rivalry eventually allowed other kingdoms to arise within parts of Alexander's former empire. This resulted in more kings producing new streams of Greek-ish coinage in such places as Cappadocia, Pergamon and Baktria.

With the large amount of territory and resources in the new eastern Hellenistic kingdoms, and with the high demand for coins post-Alexander, to support war and trade, the pace of coin production remained high in those areas. The need for so many new dies, plus the continued inclination to innovate, led to a more relaxed approach to coin design. Three main innovations from the late 4th century onwards basically defined the advent of the Hellenistic coinages – a less formal, more natural depiction of figures on dies, real-time portraiture of rulers and larger diameters of many tetradrachms.

Hellenistic influences wrought stunning changes to many of the eastern coin issues. Not only did the coinage types have to adapt to the succession of rulers in the fractionated kingdoms, but the size of the main regal and civic tetradrachms increased to make the new coin types more impressive (the fabric of the other main regal issue, posthumous Macedonian gold staters, did not change). Starting in the late 3rd century BC, the flans of tetradrachms at many mints in Asia Minor, some Greek islands and parts of the Middle East were gradually being made thinner and the perimeters extended to make them wider, with only marginal changes to their weight. Within a few decades, by the early to middle 2nd century, many tetradrachms were over 30 mm in diameter, sometimes as much as 35 mm, which even exceeded the diameter of the experimental incuse coinage of south Italy in the 6th century (those early Italian coinages ranged up to 31-32mm, but they were only half the weight of the Hellenistic coins).

The exaggerated diameter of tetradrachms is a key identifier for Hellenistic coins, but style changes are also important. Many Hellenistic dies were carved in a post-classical style, without the restrained treatment of facial and anatomical features and sometimes without great attention to detail. That being said, the slightly larger flans of the early Hellenistic coins often led to a more natural and somewhat better rendering of the main obverse types, since the extra room on the flan allowed for greater facial modeling of the favored god and hero motifs. Late in the Hellenistic period, the sheer size of some tetradrachms was impressive in itself, however, the large coins often displayed exaggerated and distended obverse features, compromising the artistry of the earlier coinages. Classical sensitivities had inevitably declined around the Greek world, in favor of more glitz and expediency.

The strength of the competing Macedonian and spin-off successor kingdoms in the east gradually declined through the 3rd and 2nd centuries, leaving more power to individual cities. The cities in turn used their increased independence to begin minting more civic coinage while adopting the evolving Hellenistic style. Cities in the more western territories of Greece and the central Mediterranean were again less affected by the new Hellenism and largely continued to mint classically styled civic coinages. Basically the western cities continued to follow the city-state model, and the character of their coinages generally remained static. However, coin production in both eastern and western areas fell off drastically in the late 2nd century BC, as adventurism and opportunism increasingly propelled Rome eastwards into the wider Greek sphere.

C-1. Hellenistic Regal or Imperial Coins

Hellenistic regal coinage designs initially maintained similar themes to the earlier classical regal coinages but with more players. These coinages were largely produced by Alexander's successors in the same Macedonian and Asia Minor territories that Alexander had ruled and conquered. In the first two or three decades after Alexander died, the various successors continued to use the format and types of Alexander the Great (Herakles and seated Zeus on the tetradrachms), creating a vast posthumous Alexander-type coinage. Different mints and issues were generally distinguished from one another by varying symbols and monograms. Eventually, when each successor adopted the title of 'King', he either substituted his own name on coins with Alexander's types, or he devised his own new obverse/reverse coin motifs with his own regal inscription. The convention for such inscriptions followed that of Alexander himself after he had adopted the title 'King of Asia' - he had added the title 'ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ', meaning 'of the King', to the reverse of his late lifetime coinages. Each successor therefore included the title 'ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ' and his name to his coinage inscription. The obverse types for the new silver tetradrachms and drachms of each successor king included either his own actual, real-time regal portrait (Seleukos, Ptolemy and some of the later Macedonian rulers took this bold and revolutionary move) or a fine style rendition of a traditionally favored god or hero. In addition to these silver issues, many posthumous Alexander and Philip gold staters were also produced by the successor kings, for military purposes, in Macedon and the East.

The scope of Hellenistic regal coinage increased further when a few entirely new kingdoms arose in Asia Minor and the Middle East (in such far-flung places as Cappadocia and Baktria). Many of these ruling dynasties, which sprung from the weakening of the successor kings, chose to represent themselves on their own coinage, adding to the diversity and quantity of regal portraiture. It was

Figure 5 – Hellenistic Regal Coins

5A:
Ptolemy I – Egypt, AR Tetradrachm
O-Head Ptolemy with aegis
R-Eagle on thunderbolt; Β. ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ
Alexandria; 310-305 BC; 27.1m/14.77g

5B:
Demetrios Poliorketes – Macedon, AR Tetradrachm
O-Head Demetrios Poliorketes with horn
R-Zeus standing on rock; Β. ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ
Chalkis; 290-287 BC; 28.3m/17.13g

5C:
Postumous Alexander III - Temnos,
AR Tetradrachm
O-Head Herakles in lion skin
R-Zeus, eagle, urn; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ
188-170 BC; 34.9m/16.74g

5D:
Demetrios I – Baktria,
AE Triple Unit
O-Head of elephant
R-Caduceus; Β. ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ
Merve; 200-185 BC; 28.1m/12.35g

not entirely a coincidence that the growth of regal portraiture in Sicily, Greece, Macedon, Asia Minor and the Middle East in the mid to late Hellenistic period occurred at a time when the much larger coin flans allowed greater modeling of features and a more spectacular presentation.

Hellenistic Regal or Imperial Coins:

- *Flan - Medium to Very Large size, Flat Both Sides*
- *Metal - Gold, Silver or Bronze*
- *Obverse - Full Die with Usual Portrait of God, Hero or King*
- *Reverse - Full Die with God or Regal Device and King's Name (Preceded by the Title 'ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ' or 'of the King')*

C-2. Hellenistic Autonomous City-State Coins

Some eastern cities were able to mint their own civic coinage while operating inside or outside the sphere of the successor Macedonian kingdoms that vied for control of the region. The earlier Hellenistic coinages issued by these independent or quasi-independent cities often took the form of the usual posthumous Alexander tetradrachms with a special civic symbol on the reverse. As the power of the Macedonian kingdoms decreased towards the end of the 3rd century (the same time as the diameter of many of the Hellenistic coin flans began to increase markedly), more cities were able to issue independent coinages. The later Hellenistic civic coins in Asia Minor tended to switch from a variation of the medium sized,

Figure 6 - Hellenistic Autonomous City-State Coins

6A:
Amphipolis, AR Tetradrachm
O-Head Artemis with bow & bowcase
R-Club in wreath; ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ
158-150 BC; 32.2m/16.70g

6B:
Syracuse - Hiketas, AE 22
O-Head Zeus; ΔΙΟΣ ΕΛΛΑΝΙΟΥ
R-Eagle on thunderbolt; ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ
287-278 BC; 23.5m/11.28g

6C:
Maroneia, AR Tetradrachm
O-Head young Dionysos
R-Dionysos; ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ Σ. ΜΑΡΩΝΙΤΩΝ
After 148 BC; 35.0m/15.41g

6D:
Carthage, AR/Billon Tridrachm
O-Head Tanit
R-Horse standing looking back
230-220 BC; 25.5m/8.90g

posthumous Alexander tetradrachm to either a larger, spread-flan version of the same or to a uniquely designed spread-flan civic coinage. Unique civic coinages did not use Alexander's types on either coin surface. For example, the city of Side in southern Turkey chose the head of Athena on the obverse and a flying Nike on the reverse, while Magnesia chose a head of Artemis on the obverse and a standing Apollo inside a wreath on the reverse. Please see my article in *The Planchet*, 'Ancient Kyme – Where Alexander Met an Amazon', May/June 2013, for a discussion of this post-posthumous coinage transition in Kyme and elsewhere.

Regarding these unique civic coinages, Magnesia, Myrina, Kyme and a few other cities in western Asia Minor, plus Athens itself, chose to mint a series of related, full weight tetradrachm coins, starting in 165 BC, based on a similar spread-flan fabric and similar obverse/reverse design themes. They featured an attractive portrait of a deity or hero on the obverse and a civic emblem within a wreath on the reverse – they have therefore been grouped under the term 'stephanoroi' or 'wreath bearers' (extensive coin photos of these types included in the 'Kyme' article noted above). Another group of related civic issues in the mid 2nd century was comprised of the reduced weight 'cistophoric' tetradrachms. Each weighed 12.5 grams rather than the more typical 16.5-17.0 grams. They continued the pattern of other related coinages, since they were minted with similar, unique types on the obverse and reverse with the addition of only unique initials and symbols to identify specific issuers. The obverse of these 'cistophoric' civic coins featured snakes crawling out of a sacred basket (the 'cista'), while the reverse displayed a bow-case with snakes entwined. With the very unusual types and separate weight standard, they were presumably intended for local use only. These coins could also be considered regal coinage, however, since they were all issued by cities within the sphere of the Pergamene kings.

Hellenistic Autonomous City-State Coins:

- *Flan - Medium to Very Large size, Flat Both Sides*
- *Metal - Silver or Bronze*
- *Obverse - Full Die with Usual Head of God, Hero or Civic Device*
- *Reverse - Full Die with God or Civic Device and Civic Name*

In Closing...

Getting back to the sense of history, there is hope that the younger generations will continue to have some appreciation of past events, even with all the distractions of the digital age. I did a Greek coin presentation for one of my granddaughter's grade six classes a couple of years ago, and I was pleasantly surprised that the students generally appreciated where the ancient peoples fitted into the historical time frame. And here, I thought they might not know which was older, the Pyramids or the Coliseum.

So I hope that this brief review of Greek coin characteristics is of some use when looking at unfamiliar coins. Knowing something about these general categorizations of coins by era is a start to understanding each new coin's political and social context, the circumstances of its minting, its likely rarity, and the nature of the artistry used at the time. A little insight can be a marvelous thing.

Credits: All coins from the author's collection / Photos by the author.

Edmonton's Coin Show and Sale

March 1 & 2, 2014

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16. Loose Change
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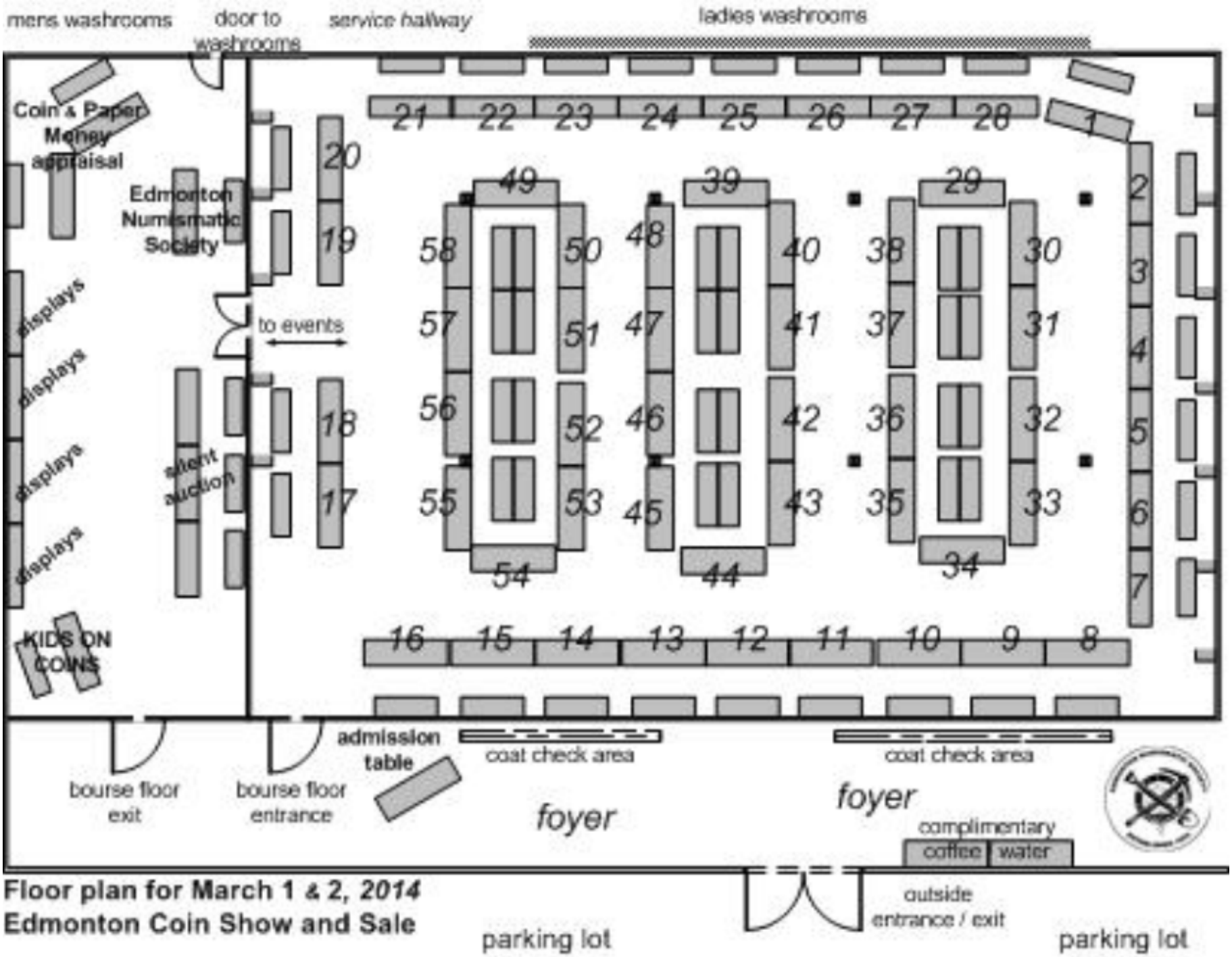

Floor plan for March 1 & 2, *2014*
Edmonton Coin Show and Sale

ENS Year End

By Roger Grove

Every December meeting, the Edmonton Numismatic Society holds a member donated auction, where all proceeds go to a charity chosen by the attending membership. This year the chatity chosen was the Edmonton Humane Society. The auction raised a total of $766.10.

Also, the Go For The Gold awards were presented by ENS Pesident David Peter.

Roger Grove is presented the gold coin for "The Planchet" category.

Mirko Dumanovic is presented the gold coin for the "Volunteer" category.

Terence Cheesman receives a silver maple leaf for "The Planchet" category.

Kimberly Casagrande - Volunteer

Andy Vanderleest - Volunteer

Ray Neiman auctioning off the many lots, which inlcuded coins, tokens, numismatic literature, etc.

The Imperial Eagle of France
-Patriot, sucker or sacrificial lamb?

By Pierre Driessen

Napoleon Bonaparte had a problem. Following his proclamation as Emperor of the French on 28 Floréal AN XII (18 May 1804), what would be the symbols of his regime and dynasty? Symbols which would personify the new political order and his subjects could identify with and rally around?

At a counsel of state on 23 Prairial, AN XII (12 June 1804), the topic of estblishing the main symbol of state was hotly debated. It had to be distinct, clear and powerful. In Napoleon's case, it also had to be very different from those of the Bourbon monarchy of the Ancien Régime and any competing European power.

The suggestions ranged from an eagle, a lion, an elephant, the bee, an oak, the cockerel and the fleur de lys to name the most notable. All were suggested for sound reasons. The lion because it would be more powerful than and distinct from the English leopard.The elephant because it is the most powerful animal in nature. The fleur de lys, because it signified France, not the Bourbons. The bee because France was a republic with a head, like a bee hive. The oak because it grows strong, straight and is almost eternal.

Reproduction of the French Imperial eagle which topped the regimental standards. This particular example is modeled after the post-1814 eagle, which can be seen from its closed legs, pre-1814 models had open legs.

Finally the counsel decided upon the cockerel, because it stood for vigilance and had been associated since mediaeval times with France. Napoleon preferred the lion however, stating: "the cockerel has no strength, in no way can it stand as the image of an empire such as France." However, on 21 Messidor, AN XII (10 July 1804), when preparing to sign the decree when preparing to sign the decree establishing the Imperial seal and coat of arms, Napoleon crossed out the lion and substituted the eagle.1

The eagle was not chosen on a whim. Rather it was a calculated and brilliant political and propaganda choice. A symbol of great antiquity, imbued with a rich and powerful mythology, it fit perfectly with the power, style and prestige the new regime wished to project. It linked Napoleon and his dynasty with the ancient glorious past, particularly ancient Greece and Rome. It also provided a symbolic link with France's more recent history, the Franks and the Carolingian empire. The Christian religious overtones were also unmistakable.

In Greek mythology, the eagle was sacred to Zeus, his sceptre being surmounted with an eagle. It was this bird which sustained him by bringing nectar while he, as an infant, was hiding from his father Cronus.***2***

In Roman mythology the eagle was associated with Jupiter. Its use and political symbolism goes back to the very founding of the Republic. According to one version of the founding legend, Romulus claimed to have seen the omen of the eagle overhead first, signifying Jupiter's approval and allowing Romulus to claim the right to found the city.***3*** Eventually the eagle became the official insignia of the Roman state and its legions marched under its protection. During the Imperial period, the eagle also became associated with the divinity of the Emperor as the Creator of the Cosmos.4

In Hebrew mythology, the eagle was equated with divinity as it was the bird which comes from above and soars above the clouds.***5***

Bronzed copper medal, 27mm, commemorating the personal distribution of the new imperial standards/flags surmounted with the imperial eagle to army units by Napoleon, 5 December 1804, on the Field of Mars outside Paris.

Obverse: Napoleon I as 'imperator' (victorious Roman general)
Legend: Napoleon Empereur.
Engraver: Jean Pierre Droz (1746 - 1823)

Reverse: Napoleon distributing the new imperial standards/flags surmounted by the imperial eagle to the various branches of the French army, and the army swearing their oath of allegiance.
Legend: Drapeaux donnes a l'armee par Napoleon Ier
(flags/standards given to the army by Napoleon Ist)
Exergue: au champ de Mars / le 14 Frim[aire] AN XIII
Engraver: Romain Vincent Jeuffroy (1749 - 1826)

The design and character of this medal was executed under the supervision of Vivant Dominique Denon (1747 - 1825), Directeur de la Monnaie de Médailles à Paris and Directeur général des Muséees Impériaux.

Attribution: Bramsen 357, Essling 1040, Zeitz 45, Laskey XLV, Millin 90.

In Christian mythology the eagle is symbolic of the Fourth Gospel and associated with its author Saint John the Evangelist. It represents Jesus' Ascension and Christ's divine nature. As the eagle was believed to have the ability to look straight into the sun, its use extols Christians to look directly onto eternity. Many ancient beliefs and associations surrounding the eagle were absorbed and usurped by the early Christians, with note the Roman emperor's role as Creator of the Cosmos was transferred to Christ.***6,7***

During the Middle Ages, the iconography of the eagle was prominent in religious texts and buildings. Early medieval sources record that a bronze eagle stood on top of Charlemagne's chapel at Achen. Even today many lecterns found in churches are in the shape of an eagle with outstretched wings.

The thunderbolt, Zeus/Jupiter favorite weapon, upon which the eagle rests its right talon warns all of the ferocity with which enemies of the regime and the French Empire will be attacked.

As an emblem, the eagle provided the new regime the aura of legitimacy, stability and power. Its use associated Napoleon with the prestige of past empires and advertised he was laying claim to their legacy.

This was of particular importance in reference to his pan-European aspirations, which were to echo the territorial expanses of the Roman and Carolingian Empires. The assumption of this legacy can be seen in the style of the period, known as 'Empire', which was an 18th century interpretation of ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman culture and motifs.

The power of the symbolism of the eagle was most dramatically employed in the French army. When deciding to issue the new standards to the troops, Napoleon had initially wanted to make the eagle part of the overall design of the colours. Then he changed his mind and decided to make the eagle itself the standard. He wrote to his chief of staff Berthier: "The Eagle with wings outspread, as on the Imperial Seal, will be at the head of the standard staves, as was the practice in the Roman army. The flag will be attached at the same distance beneath the Eagle as was the Labarum." This reduced the flag from being the regimental colour toa mere ornamental ancillary to the eagle.***8*** This can be seen on the reverse of the medal on the first page.

The eagle was made of gilded copper and placed atop a staff painted imperial blue, 240cm in length. The importance attached to these was evidenced by the fact that Napoleon issued every eagle personally. Initially each battalion was issued one. In 1808 this was changed to one per regiment, with detailed regulations for its carrying and protection in battle. Soldiers who carried the eagles were especially selected and given special rank. They were appointed and dismissed by Napoleon himself.***9***

Due to its personal connection with Napoleon, the eagle standard was an important prize in battle. This caused Napoleon to gradually restrict their issuance to line (regular) regiments and their carrying into battle to units which could give proper protection to them. Eventually regiments of hussars, chasseurs à cheval, dragoons and light infantry, although issued eagles, no longer carried them into battle.***10***

A good example of the use of Roman motifs for propaganda purposes by the Napoleonic regime is illustrated by the similarities between the Napoleon medal shown on the first page and the sestertius of Trajan depicted here. The obverse of both depict the truncated bust of a Roman imperator, the victorious field commander entitled to wear the laurel wreath. The reverse of the Napoleon medal shows Napoleon dressed as a Roman emperor standing on a '*suggestum*' or platform, like that on the sestersius.***11, 12, 13, 14*** The attendant behind Napoleon is also clothed as a Roman On both reverses can be found the folding campaign chair in the Roman style and military standards figure prominently. There is one important departure from the Roman motif however. This departure makes the motives of the Napoleonic regime for issuing the medal clear.

At first sight it would seem that the medal was merely issued for commemorative purposes. Upon closer inspection however, you can see that the soldiers receiving the new imperial eagle standards from Napoleon are clothed in 19th century French military uniforms, not in Roman legionary attire. This detail symbolically brought together the present and the past. It shows Napoleon laying claim to Europe's heritage and assuming the mantle as the legitimate heir of Rome's emperors and all those who, throughout history have done the same, such as Charlemagne.

Napoleon is literally bringing forth the grandeur, power and majesty from the past to a new and invigorated nation of the French. Through Napoleon, France would assume its rightful place of preeminence on the European continent and in the world. The age old dream of a pan-European empire could finally be realized, under French dominance. The foremost symbol of which would be the French imperial eagle.

References:

1 - Napoleon.org, 'The Symbols of Empire';
2 - The Dictionary of Mythology, an A - Z of the themes, legends and heroes, p.314;
3 - Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p.214, 231;
4 - Ibid;
5 - Ibid; The Catholic Encyclopedia, St. John the Evangelist;
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8 - Napoleon's Army, p.67;
9 - Ibid;
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New Membership Applications

Ron Cairns

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

March 1 & 2, 2014 - Edmonton's Spring Coin Show and Sale, Edmonton Hotel & Conference Centre, 4520 - 76 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 0A5, dealers wishing to attend call 780-270-6312.

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

April 9, 2014 - ENS April Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

May 14, 2014 - ENS May Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

June 11, 2014 - ENS June Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start.

July/August, 2014 - No meetings

September 10 2014 - ENS September Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Pizza night!! Complementary pizza for all attending members and guests.

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

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