

THE PLANCHET

EDMONTON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

June/July 2012

Volume 59 Issue 5

The New Paper

Plastic Money Takes Over

Canada

1812 Prise de Wilna

Celebrating the
Capture of Vilna

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June/July 2012 Volume 59. Issue 5



THE PLANCHET

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ON THE COVER:

Up close and personal with Canada's new polymer 'paper' money.

The reverse of the 'Prise de Wilna' medal, celebrating the 1812 capture of the Lithuanian capital of Vilna by the French.

*Disclaimer: The opinions herein are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Edmonton Numismatic Society.
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Message from the President

David Peter 2010-13



Hello everyone. I hope that everyone has had an excellent summer.

For those who attended the national conventions, I hope that you discovered some interesting pieces or learned something new. I know that I did. I decided this summer to delve into a new area of numismatics in the form of Canadian Tire Money. I recall talking with Lube Wojtiw in years past about how Canadian Tire Money helped collectors of Bank of Canada notes identify trends in printing and distribution methods for the new replacements. I had a chance to take in a very interesting meeting with the collectors club and got involved in some lively discussions about items from gift cards to older notes.

I had a great opportunity to meet new people and reconnect with old friends. The RCNA show was well received, with many ENS members in attendance. Overall, a great success for the Calgary club. Congratulations.

Lastly, I wanted to mention if you're in New York in the near future, be sure to check out the new exhibit at the Federal Reserve, featuring such rarities as the 1933 Double Eagle and the Brasher doubloon. It sounds like quite an opportunity to view some of the world's rarest coins. But due to security concerns, it is by appointment only.

David

@ The Next Meeting Wednesday, September 12, 2012



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

- Pizza Night 2012 (free for current ENS members, bring a guest)
- club matters
- RCNA Calgary 2012 Convention report - Ermin Chow
- *The Planchet* report
- ANA World's Fair of Money Convention report - Roger Grove
- call for auction lots for ENS November 2012 Edmonton Coin Show and Sale - silent auction (submission of lots open to current ENS members)
- ENS November 2012 Edmonton Coin Show and Sale - display theme discussion and call for display submissions (submission of display open to current ENS members - prizes to be won)
- Show and Tell - bring your summer numismatic discoveries and finds to share with fellow members
- Silent Auction
- Door Prize draw

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About Your Society

Minutes from ENS Monthly Meeting on June 13, 2012

The meeting started at 1924 hrs.

A reminder was given about the club BBQ to be held at Jeremy Martin's home on July 8, 2012. BYOB and lawn chairs. If past years are an accurate indication, a great time is guaranteed for all, with collectors and friends basking in the camaraderie of the ENS, exchanging tall tales.

The 2012 RCNA convention in Calgary was discussed. It will be held from July 19-22, 2012 at the Westin Calgary, located downtown at 320 4th Avenue SW. It is worth noting that 2012 is also the 100th Anniversary of the Calgary Stampede which runs from July 6 to 15, 2012. It's unfortunate that both events don't overlap as both are fantastic reasons to visit our friends to the south.

It was announced that Ermin Chow will be the ENS delegate at the RCNA in Calgary. He will be giving a detailed report of the convention at our September meeting.

Before starting a series of short videos, Ray Neiman spoke about a 1998 Proof Set that was made with a special insert specifically made for the CNA convention that year.

The following videos were shown:

- Cleaning Ancient Coins
- The PCGS Coin Grading Process
- eBay Stops Counterfeits From Being Sold
- How It's Made: The 2 Euro Coin
- U.S. Silver Eagles
- Perth Mint
- Grading Indian Head Cents

Door Prizes and the Show & Tell followed;

- Several pieces were passed

around the room for the members to examine. There was fittingly enough after the previous videos, a 1903 Indian Head Cent coin graded by the *Professional Coin Grading Service*. The grade assigned to this collector favorite was Mint State 63 Brown, which also came with a green CAC label. This means that after the coin was originally slabbed, someone paid to have it looked at by the *Certified Acceptance Corporation* in the hope of it getting the coveted green sticker. For those who are not aware, the CAC label's premise is to identify coins that are solid for the grade assigned by the grading companies.

The meeting was adjourned at 2055 hrs with the message for everyone to have an excellent and safe summer.

Several members rendezvous at the 124st Boston Pizza for further sharing of numismatics.

Mitch Goudreau
ENS Secretary



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Canada Enters a World of Polymer

By Ermin Chow

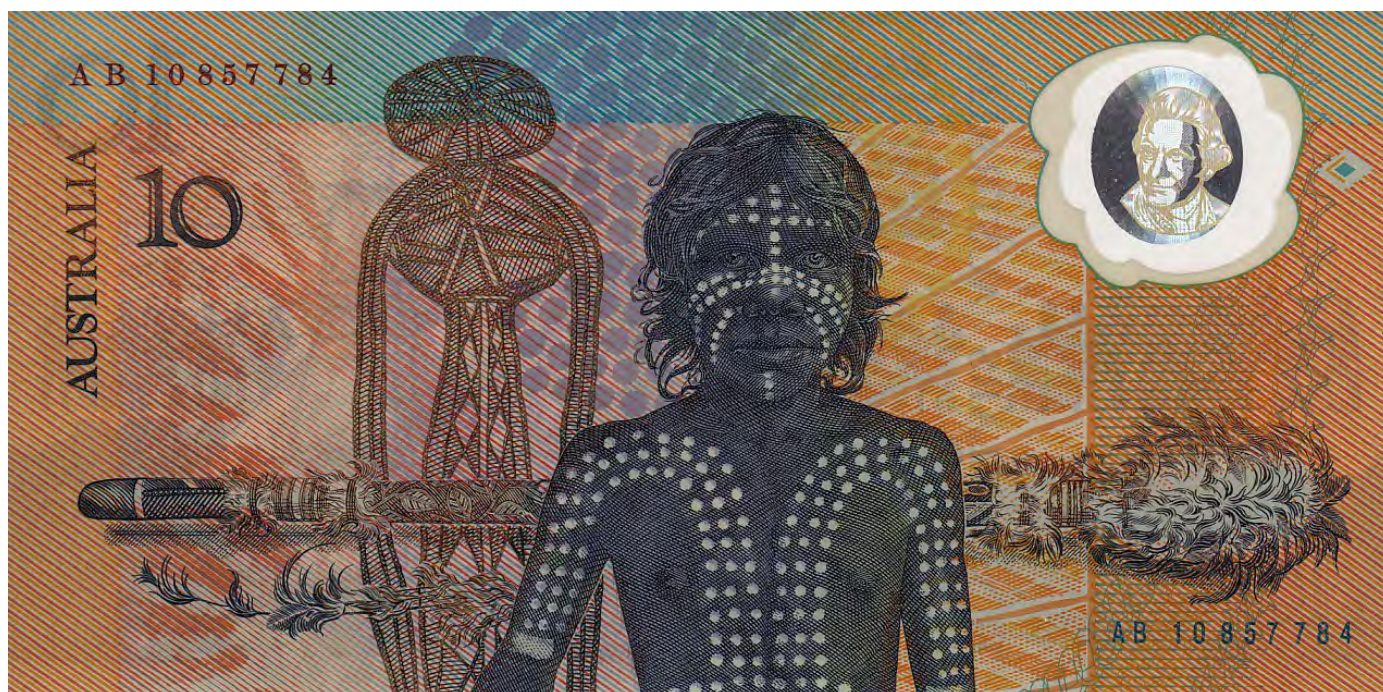


Most of the population in Canada may have already noticed the shift from paper to polymer currency. Canada is in the process of joining the growing ranks of countries which will fully convert to using polymer-based banknotes. Many questions arise about their use, including "how secure are they?" and "are they really a better alternative than paper?" Using polymer currency has numerous advantages and disadvantages, which are the main topics of discussion for most governments and central banks that are considering the switch.

A Brief History of Polymer Currency

Although polymer notes were developed before the Australian 10-dollar bill, issued in January 1988, this was the initial issue of polymer for general circulation. Not surprisingly, Australia was the also the first country to fully convert to polymer banknotes in 1996. Unlike previous attempts by other central banks to create polymer currency, the Australian notes, from the outset, were durable, and the ink bonded well with the polymer. They were fabricated out of polymer biaxially-oriented polypropylene (BOPP), which increased their durability. The research and engineering of this compound was through a collaboration of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and the University of Melbourne. Australia led the world into the age of polymer currency.

As a result, over thirty countries worldwide have issued polymer currency at one point, although currently only twenty-four have been using it for circulation. Of those twenty-four countries, only seven have fully converted to polymer, including Australia, Bermuda, Brunei, New Zealand, Guinea, Romania and Vietnam. The other countries, including Canada, are either in the process of switching over or experimenting with the use of polymer for their currencies. There are some countries which issued polymer banknotes merely for commemorative purposes. Although there is an exhaustive list of factors to consider in switching to polymer, many countries and central banks have been reported as waiting to make their move until others have successfully done so.





Check to Protect: Feel, Look and Flip

Feel the smooth, unique texture of the note. It's made from a single piece of polymer with some transparent areas.

Frosted maple leaf window

Look through the transparent outline.

Large window

Look through the transparent area containing a detailed metallic portrait and building.

Metallic portrait and building

Flip the note to see these images from the front repeated in the same colours and detail on the back.



Polymer Notes in Canada

In the Canadian government's 2010 budget, Conservative Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced the introduction of polymer currency in Canada, citing cost saving measures. Finance Minister Flaherty revealed that in November 2011, Canada would commence the switchover with the release of the 100-dollar denomination. On March 26th of this year, the 50-dollar note was released, and the 20-dollar issue is scheduled for circulation in November. Completing the series are the 5- and 10-dollar issues, scheduled to be released sometime next year. By the end of 2013, Canada will have fully converted to using banknotes of the future, joining numerous other countries.

The new Canadian releases feature many national symbols. For example, the new 20-dollar banknote shows the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France, which remembers and honours Canada's soldiers of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in World War I. This was a battle in which many nations allied with the cause were defeated, and the Canadian victory there gained the country much prominence on the world stage. The new 100-dollar issue features the East Block of Canada's Parliament Hill and has the theme of medical innovation on its reverse. Its 50-dollar counterpart shows World War II era Prime Minister, W.L. Mackenzie King, and Canada's northern regions on its reverse. Though the designs of the other notes have not been revealed yet, these coming issues are sure to display patriotic themes.

Implementation of many new security features is another major objective in the release of polymer notes. For example, on the 100-dollar note in the Canadian polymer series, an added security feature includes raised ink, which appears on the large denomination number, the shoulders of the

large portrait, and on the words "Bank of Canada" and "Banque du Canada." Another is a large clear window revealing a metallic image of a building and a portrait of Robert Borden. Small numbers in the denomination value have been added in and around the window; some of these numbers are printed in reverse. There is a maple leaf border around the window, with maple leaves printed in and around it. In addition, the smaller frosted maple leaf window (with its transparent outline) in the middle of the note has hidden numbers within it. Highlighted are some of the major security features of the new Canadian notes, though there are other smaller ones as well.

Why Polymer?

As mentioned above, Canada has effectively utilized the many properties of polymer in creating its own unique security features, as have other countries, which, overall, greatly discourages counterfeiting. The advantage of a significantly higher durability is most evident in warmer climates. Polymer notes do not absorb moisture, whereas cotton based ones do. In Canada's temperate climate, they should last about three times longer, which is about seven to eight years. There is an obvious benefit from these notes, especially in moister climates, saving much government expense.

In addition to the economic national interests fulfilled by polymer currency, there are also environmental benefits that result, the most obvious being less material having to be thrown out each year. As mentioned, traditional banknotes are made from cotton, the disposal of which can indirectly harm the environment during crop growing, through using pesticides and excessive use of water. Also, polymer material can easily be

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recycled into pellets for creating household products after its life cycle. These notes are also much cleaner due to their plastic makeup, since they are resistant to soiling. Benefits for the consumer include polymer's water resistance property as well as its durability against tearing.

Drawbacks of Polymer

Despite all the beneficial evidence pointing towards changing over to polymer, there are several areas in which polymer loses out to the traditional paper currency. For example, polymer currency is much harder to fold, causing some inconvenience. Although being extremely thin as compared with its conventional counterpart, notes made out of it are difficult to count due to their slippery surfaces. They also tend to become sticky when wet, being another disadvantage.

In less wealthy countries, especially underdeveloped countries, the initial cost of the switch to polymer may be too high to become practical. The cost of the switchover in Canada is estimated to be around \$75–100 million, as compared with \$20–30 million in the previous changeover from the Birds of Canada series to the Canadian Journey series. For underdeveloped countries, it may not be feasible to recycle old polymer currency, since they likely do not have the facilities to do so. The switch is expensive and may not be as environmentally friendly in some places.

The Final Decision: Is it worth it?

Though many may disagree, using polymer as circulation currency may be one of the most intelligent decisions a central bank or government could make. These notes are much more environmentally friendly, durable, cost-effective, and they greatly discourage counterfeiting. Despite minor inconveniences when using them, they are much thinner and therefore easier to carry around. Even poorer countries with limited budgets should switch to polymer currency as soon as possible, since the savings will benefit their people and their economy in the long run. Polymer currency is arguably one of the greatest monetary innovations of the past century.

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CONGRATULATIONS ERMIN!!!

This article won Ermin
2nd place in the Young
Numismatists Literary Awards
Contest with the American
Numismatic Association.

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2012 YN Literary Awards Contest Winners Announced

The American Numismatic Association announced the winners of the 2012 Young Numismatist Literary Awards Competition on Thursday night in Colorado Springs, Colo. Winners were presented with substantial cash prizes and gift certificates to build their personal libraries, courtesy of contest sponsor Whitman Publishing.

Awards were presented in three categories: the Bill Fivaz Young Numismatist Literary Award, for writers ages 8-12; the Q. David Bowers Young Numismatist Literary Award, ages 13-17; and the Kenneth E. Bressett Young Numismatist Literary Award, ages 18-22.

Chad Nevins, 10, of Las Vegas, flew to Colorado Springs with his father, Russell, to accept the Fivaz Award in person from Fivaz himself. He received a plaque, a \$500 cash prize, and a \$500 voucher for numismatic references published by Whitman.

Nevins' article, "How I Found Freedom with a Pocket Full of Change," arose from a school assignment about Ellis Island. He and his father selected world coins from their collection, and Chad used them to tell the story of a 20-year-old Polish immigrant who passed through Ellis Island in the late 1930s.

"We wrote about a woman who collected coins with her grandpa. We thought writing about the coins would make the article more special," Chad said.

Garrett Ziss placed second for "Historical Coin Changes" and Frederic Fosco took third for "The 1969-S Double Die Obverse Lincoln Cent." Second and third place winners receive \$200 and \$100 Whitman Publishing book certificates, respectively.

Ian Garcia won first place in the Bowers category for "The Mysteries of Numismatics: Explicit Art Tokens." Q. David Bower's son, Lee, read a personal message from his father before presenting the award to Garcia, who likewise received \$1,000 in cash and prizes.

Ermin Chow took second for "Canada Enters a World of Polymer," and Cole Schenewerk placed third for "The Myriad Metals Used in Coinage."

In the Bressett category, John McKearney received third place for "The Rise of Virtual Currency: How 'Bitcoin' Revolutionizes the Future of Numismatics." No first- or second-place awards were given.

The American Numismatic Association is a congressionally chartered nonprofit educational organization dedicated to encouraging people to study and collect money and related items. The ANA helps its 27,000 members and the public discover and explore the world of money through its vast array of education and outreach programs, as well as its museum, library, publications, conventions and seminars. For more information, call 719-632-2646 or go to www.money.org.



Son of X - A Tetradrachm from the Mint of Thasos

By Terence Cheesman

A few months ago I wrote about the consideration of the importance of style when collecting Greek coins. Style, or the lack of it, is an important indicator of the desirability of the coin and thus the price it can command. I return to this general theme with a recent acquisition, a tetradrachm of Thasos which was probably minted sometime around 168 B.C.



I will begin this story with the purchase of a book. One day while scouring the web for new coins, I came upon a book that seemed interesting. The book was titled *Die Silberprägung der Insel Thasos und die Tetradrachmen des "thasischen Typs" vom 2.-1.Jahrhundert v. Chr.* by Ilya Prokopov. Basically it is about the tetradrachms minted at Thasos and their imitations during the last two centuries before Christ. This may surprise some in the audience who are well versed in my complete lack of any knowledge of the German language, however I felt the book was an important aid in trying to understand this vast and complex group of coins.

The tetradrachm coinage of Thasos seems to have begun around 168 B.C. This year is significant as it marks the final collapse of the nearby Macedonian Kingdom. The destruction of the power of the Hellenistic Greek Kingdoms by the Romans had the effect of creating a number of new civic coinages which replaced the royal ones, and the tetradrachm coinage of Thasos was only one among many. How long it was minted is again a matter of dispute. Prokopov identifies eleven issues, some of which are quite small and others which seem to

be unusually crude. This suggests that the minting of these coins may have been sporadic with a few intense periods of activity, followed by long intervals of inactivity. Complicating this picture are tetradrachms minted by others using the design of the Thasian tetradrachms. Some are clearly minted by the Romans to pay for expenses incurred during the war with Mithradates VI of Pontus which began in 88 B.C. and ended in 63 B.C. Thasian tetradrachms could have been struck by others both during and after this period. Prokopov identifies some nineteen different issues belonging to this loose group of Thasian type coins. These coins became popular with the Celtic tribes north of the Danube River and were extensively copied by them. This last group is not covered by the book written by Prokopov.

Prokopov does seem to suggest that the first few issues were minted over a twenty year period ending in 148 B.C. Again there are problems with this chronology. Some of the later groups, especially Groups 9 to 13, look very close to the style of the Thasian type coins issued by the Romans, and it is hard to believe that these coins are not contempor-

ary. However trying to establish a chronology of an ancient coinage simply by style can be a dangerous undertaking. As I have mentioned before in other articles, Greek civic coinage often exists with very minimal historic or archaeological context. Thasos is no different. Thus a large issue with poor style may simply represent a very rapid one minted under duress.

The obverse features the bust of Dionysus who was the god of wine, chaos and the madness that can come as a result of emotion trumping reason. On this coin he is depicted with long hair, has a small ponytail at the back of his head and is crowned with a wreath made up of ivy leaves and flowers. He also has a thin band across his forehead. In Prokopov's study this is obverse die number 1. The reverse features a young Herakles, wreathed and naked, standing left. His right hand rests upon a club, and a lion's skin is draped over his left arm. Between the club and the right leg of Herakles are the letters ΔΙ which would refer to the magistrate in charge of minting the coin. The legend reads ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΘΑΣΙΩΝ. Roughly translated this would be "Hercules the saviour of the Thasians". Unlike those on Roman coins Greek coin inscriptions are usually found in the genitive or possessive case. Normally this would simply mean that the state, in this case Thasos, guarantees the coin. The inscription also claims that the Thasians have a special regard for Herakles in his guise as savior.

Prokopov identifies this as reverse die 14. Early in the history of this die some damage occurred just below the chin of Herakles. Prokopov identi-

fies 4 obverse and 17 reverse dies in his Group I. According to his study the obverse dies were carved by the same hand and appear sequentially; as each die wore out it was replaced by another. However the presence of this coin, as well as a few others, suggests that a number of obverse and reverse dies may have been pooled together and used at the same time. Discoveries like this can increase our knowledge of ancient minting practices and can hint at the organization of ancient mints.

Though struck during the latter period of Hellenistic art, a period usually associated with inferior designs and decay, some of the Thasian coins show a quality of style similar to earlier periods of Greek art. This is certainly true of this obverse die which is well engraved with good proportions. The hair is neatly carved, and the strands falling to the back of the neck look natural. The leaves and the flowers of the wreath seem to contour with the shape of the head. However the reverse is somewhat less successful. The head of Herakles seems rather too big for the rest of his body, and the lion's skin is rather poorly defined. It should be noted, though, that the face and hair of Herakles are well done with few of the distortions created when trying to carve such a small image.

As noted above the tetradrachms of Thasos were a very successful coinage bridging the era of the Hellenistic monarchies and that of the domination by Rome. It is a testament to their success that others, including the Romans, copied the coinage perhaps in greater numbers than were originally minted at Thasos.



A Red Cent on the Red Planet

Mars is now the first planet (other than the Earth) to have currency on it. In November 2011, NASA's Mars rover "Curiosity" was launched carrying a 1909 V.D.B Lincoln cent. Why would NASA send a red penny to the red planet? The penny is used to calibrate instruments for measurements since the coin has a known weight and dimension.

Next time you hear the saying, "I haven't got a red cent"; think about how Mars now does.





Numismatic Travels

2012 Denver ANA Money Show

By Mitch Goudreau



Over the past winter I apparently earned enough good behavior points from my wife to qualify for a leave pass. This was promptly cashed in for a flight to Denver, Colorado which allowed me to attend the American Numismatic Association's Spring Money Show. This large coin show was held at the Denver Convention Center from May 10 – 12, 2012 and reportedly had 500 dealers.

The size of this show is unlike anything we have in Canada. I was like a kid in a candy store, amazed at the sheer size of it all. The largest selections offered were of course centered on the United States' extensive series of coinage, currency, medals and tokens. There were however enough choices to satisfy all collectors' tastes, even if most of the better known ancient dealers were at a show in San Francisco.

The most common Canadian items were the silver & gold bullion Maple Leafs with a sprinkling of silver dollars, currency and RCM products. I wasn't looking for Canadian decimal coins, but I'm sure they were available, if I would have asked to look through dealer boxes.

Most of the higher grade or better quality American coinage was in PCGS & NGC graded slabs with a sprinkling of ANACS and other types. I believe that slabs are much more accepted

by numismatists in the United States than by those in Canada. I know that firsthand, as some members of the ENS have made it loud and clear to me when I've showed them such purchases in the past!



One of the author's acquisitions.

I came to the show with a general idea of some items that I would be looking for, but I was open to acquiring whatever caught my fancy. Despite the barbs I'd be facing later, I knew that I would be purchasing a \$2 ½ Indian Head gold coin in a slab, as they are often counterfeited. I'm slowly working on forming a type set of the most common types of U.S. coins. My goal is to get one coin per affordable type with good eye appeal. I'm quite happy to have common dates in a grade that won't break the bank, which is how I ended up with a PCGS 1915 AU-58 \$2 ½ Indian Head coin.

Other purchases made were quite diverse. They ranged from a couple of Civil War tokens and



The vast bourse.



Display of the 1913 Liberty "V" nickel.

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Continued from page 12

Confederate notes to some Roman Republic and Imperial coins. In between that there are some 18th century French jetons with great cabinet toning and an Auguste Shipwreck pillar dollar. I also bought a microscope with variable magnification of up to 220x. I intend to start taking better pictures of my coins, as my point and shoot camera just doesn't make the grade.

The bourse wasn't the only focus of the show, since education and exhibits played an important role as well. The ANA's Money Museum had first-class displays of great rarities such as the 1804 dollar, McDermott/Bebee 1913 Liberty Head nickel, 1792 Half disme, Leshner Referendum dollars and Colorado Territorial Gold. ANA members also exhibited several competitive and non-competitive displays in six categories – history and politics, economics, geography, common design element, arts and science.

As if that wasn't enough, there were seminars throughout the 3 days of the convention on a wide range of topics.

I also took advantage of the show's proximity to visit a couple of nearby numismatic destinations. The first was a visit to the Denver Mint, while the second one was a side trip south to Colorado Springs to visit the ANA's Money Museum. They were both very worthwhile outings.

Attending a convention such as this may seem to

be a large expense, but it can be quite affordable. I used Airmiles for the flight, so I only had to pay the taxes & security fees. I also took advantage of some internet deals and ended up staying in a very nice & normally expensive hotel for under \$65 a night. The tradeoff was that it was located 20 miles south of downtown Denver, which wasn't a problem as I was renting a vehicle anyway, thanks to another great internet offer.

I recommend trying to combine holiday trips with coin shows or numismatic destinations whenever possible. For example, a trip to Florida in January has a certain appeal because of its weather, local attractions and the Florida United Numismatists (FUN) coin show. My wife is interested in going to Texas on holidays, so it looks like the ANA's October 2012 Fall Money show in Dallas may be on the radar. It's always better to travel with someone else, even if it means that I'll be under close supervision and may be somewhat restricted on my coin budget!



***1747 Mexico - 8 Reales.
Auguste Shipwreck.
Another treasure found
by the author.***



Endless exhibits on all numismatic topics imaginable - and then some.





2012 ENS Annual BBQ

By Pierre Driessen



The weather was magnificent, we could not have wished for better if we had bribed the weather gods. The sun was shining, with a light breeze and no mosquitoes.

The Annual ENS BBQ, held Sunday 8 July, was a raving success. It was wonderful to see over 40 ENS members and spouses who came to share fellowship and a great meal. It was great to see a good number of new members.

The steaks were grilled to perfection by the tag team of chefs, Marc Bink, Mitch Goudreau and Pierre Driessen. In addition to fine quality meat there were salads, garlic bread, chilli, fruits, pudding, desserts and of course plenty of beer and wine.

Our hosts, the husband and wife team of Jeremy and Christie Martin, are warmly thanked by the ENS for their hospitality and hard work, which allowed this year's BBQ to be a memorable ENS social event. If you couldn't or didn't attend this year, make sure to make time for 2013.

Pierre Driessen
social coordinator





My, What Big Claws You Have!!

Eagle-Grasping-Dolphin Coins of the Black Sea

By Wayne Hansen



The Black Sea region is generally known in ancient Greek circles as a source of large bronze coins and small silver issues. As with many parts of the Mediterranean, the Black Sea was colonized by migrants who embarked from established Greek centers in the 7th and 6th Centuries to search for fertile land, ample fisheries and trade. Ionian Greeks from the thriving settlement of Miletos in southern Asia Minor founded most of these Black Sea colonies after they headed north through the narrow Bosphorus Strait. The Black Sea is gigantic, with an east-west length of 1,175 kilometers, an area of 436,000 sq kilometers, and no significant islands to break up the expanse. The open water could be treacherous. Once past the Bosphorus, the settlers could only move farther and farther along the coast in one direction or the other to find the right conditions for survival. It is difficult to appreciate the hardships that the Greek colonists encountered, especially the colonists who ventured to the far northern shores, where there was a marked change in climate and where there was a greater ingrained distrust for the 'barbaric' local tribes. See the map in Figure 1 for locations of the new Black Sea colonies.

The colonists established several settlements along the western coast of the Black Sea - past the Danube and Dniپر rivers, past present-day Ukraine and the tribal areas of the Sarmatians and Scythians, as far north as the Crimea (to Pantikapaion). They also moved east along the southern coast of the Black Sea, which is the north coast of present-day Turkey. Despite the intervening distances, the more variable climate and neighboring barbarians, the new cities created many new opportunities for local industry and for extensive trade. Those settlers who moved to the north traded with tribes farther north and those who moved to the east traded with nations to

the east and the southeast. Sinope's trade with the east was further enhanced since it was at the western end of a long, Middle Eastern caravan route to the upper Euphrates River. All of the Black Sea colonies also acted as trading intermediaries between cities in the Greek homeland and distant cultures. Coinage would have been useful to this diverse economy and it was developed early during the 5th Century BC.

Black Sea and Dolphin Coinages

Black Sea coinages were somewhat unusual. The far northern cities, including Olbia and Pantikapaion, tended to emphasize bronze issues, while those along the west and south shores emphasized small silver denominations. Rather than do a survey of all Black Sea coins, my focus here is to describe the convergence that took place in three of the Black Sea Greek colonies, Sinope, Istros and Olbia, when they adopted a sea eagle-grasping-dolphin reverse type for their primary coin denominations (see Figures 3-5). Surprisingly, the eagle and dolphin image was not used elsewhere in the Greek world even though it is stylish and dramatic.

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Figure 1 - Map: Ancient Greek Colonies on the Black Sea

This map illustrates the locations of the main Greek colonies that were founded along the shores of the Black Sea starting in the 7th Century BC. Three of the colonies highlighted in red on the map - Sinope, Istros and Olbia – issued coins using the eagle-grasping-dolphin motif during the 5th- 4th Century BC.

As an aside to the main discussion, I also show an example of an archaic/proto eagle-dolphin coin from Sinope that preceded its classic eagle-dolphin coin issues, plus I show examples of other Greek coins later in the article that used the dolphin (without the eagle) as a major design element. The dolphin by itself was not often employed as a main coin type, although when the dolphin was featured vast numbers of coins were sometimes minted making them fairly easy to find today.

Distribution and Meaning of the Eagle-Dolphin Coin Type

The ancient colonial cities of Sinope, Istros and Olbia minted coins with the sea eagle and dolphin design primarily in the 5th to 4th Century BC. Sinope is located on the south shore of the Black Sea, while Istros and Olbia are on the northwest coast. As noted in the introduction, the inhabitants of these three far-flung colonies shared a history as colonies of Miletos, the Ionic Greek colony on the south coast of modern Turkey. With their natural wealth and their developing interaction with other cities and cultures in the region, the new colonies constructed fleets of ships so that they could prosper from commercial trade – trade with each other, trade with tribes both close-by

and far away, and trade with Greek cities in the Mediterranean to the south.

With their intensive trading economy and the spread of Greek coin culture, the colonies would have wanted to initiate their own coinages. Through some affiliation or alliance, they arranged to use the same sea eagle-grasping-dolphin device on the reverse of their coins during the 4th Century BC. The mythical and religious relationships of the eagle-grasping-dolphin type are unclear. Normally the eagle is associated with Zeus, while the dolphin was sacred to Aphrodite and Apollo (in one myth Apollo transformed himself into a dolphin to entice the Cretans to attend his temple at Delphi). The dolphin also did errands for Poseidon, god of the sea. Apollo was the second-most venerated god in Greek mythology (behind Zeus) and he was very prominent in cities founded by Ionian Greeks, many of which portrayed the dolphin or eagle-grasping-dolphin on their coins. The dolphin was generally seen in myths as playful and the helper of mankind, so it is easy to see how these three seafaring cities would have regarded the dolphin with reverence. The cities were isolated and were probably superstitious where the unpredictable sea was involved. They might possibly have looked upon the dolphin as both a protector of



Figure 2 – (Eagle Head-Dolphin Type): Early Silver Drachm of Sinope (480-450 BC)

18.0 x 12.0 mm, 5.9g. Obv: Crude head of eagle with curved beak and L-shaped leg; small dolphin below. Rev: Punch with two sunken quadrants, each sunken area with granulated surface and single pellet. BMC 13.95, 3. Ex: HJ Berk, 1999 and Praefectus Coins, 2012

their harbors and ships, and a protector of sailors in peril. Zeus does not seem to have a direct connection to the sea eagle since Apollo was the patron deity of most of the city-states involved. On the other hand, there were secondary cults of Zeus in these cities, and in one amusing legend Zeus (who was more human than one might think) wanted to marry nymph Sinope, daughter of the River God Asopus. But Zeus first granted Sinope one wish and she chose to be an eternal virgin, thereby outwitting him. He left her to sit on a nice promontory looking out to the sea (presumably near the site of ancient Sinope).

A. The Eagle-Dolphin Coins

1. Sinope.

Being a major trading port on the Black Sea, and the most important one on the northern coast of Asia Minor, Sinope began issuing a series of drachms weighing approximately 6 grams around 500 BC. The obverse the drachms displayed a crude misshapen head of an eagle with a tiny dolphin below, and on the reverse there was a compartmentalized punch with two pellets. It was a sort of proto-version of the eagle-on-dolphin design. I recently purchased one of these early coins since it is archaic and in exceptional condition, and since it shows a distorted, Picasso-esque sense of scale (see Figure 2). It's possible that the obverse image might also be an attempt to describe the geographic landmarks of the city and harbor – situated as it is on a triangular peninsula – but that is another matter. Around

425 BC, this archaic design was modified to show a more realistic depiction of the eagle's head and tiny dolphin (but still no eagle body).

With increasing wealth and greater coin output around 400 BC, Sinope began issuing a classical drachm with the head of a nymph on the obverse and a complete flying eagle-grasping-dolphin motif on the reverse (see Figure 3). This coin type became a model for the same types in the other Black Sea cities. The weight of the new coins decreased to 5 grams in this period and production continued until late in the 4th Century. The later coins in the series, such as seen in Figure 3, retain the city name below the dolphin, but also a magistrate's name above. The political history of Sinope became more complicated when the Persian Empire took control of the city starting in the early 4th Century. Alexander the Great brushed by to the south when he was pursuing the Persians in 334-333 BC, but it seems that the Macedonians didn't have too much interest in the Black Sea. In 183 BC Sinope became part of the Pontic Kingdom, and then in 70 BC it was conquered by Rome.

2. Istros.

Istros was west of the Bosphorus and much farther north than Sinope, located on a peninsula at the confluence of two major river deltas (in present-day Romania). The colonists chose the site since it was near an abundance of arable land and offshore fishing, which allowed the city not only to support its inhabitants but also to become a major supplier of grain and fish to Greece. Istros maintained



Figure 3 – (Full Eagle-Dolphin Type): Silver Drachm of Sinope (330-300 BC)

19.0 x 17.0 mm, 5.04g, 5h. Obv: Head of nymph Sinope; hair in sakkos. Rev: ΣΙΝΩ; Sea eagle grasping dolphin; magistrate name above. SNG BM Black Sea 1481; SNG Cop 281; von Aulock 201. Ex: CNG, 2000.

cults of Apollo, Zeus and Aphrodite, which again related to the choice of the eagle-dolphin type on its coins. Through the centuries, there was considerable conflict among the Persians, Greeks and Scythians over control of the area, resulting in destruction and rebuilding of the city about once every one-hundred years.

The obverse of the Istros drachms bore a unique reversed-heads motif that may have alluded to the two adjacent river deltas, the two Dioscuri,

or some other ancient inspiration (the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, were the mythical twin sons of Zeus who were patrons of sailors and who later became immortal by being transformed into the constellation Gemini). The reverse of the Istros drachms had a classic rendition of the sea eagle-grasping-dolphin type, complete with the name of the city-state and a control monogram. While the reverse design is pleasant, the Istros coinage is not as artistic, nor as finely carved, as the contemporary Sinope drachms.



Figure 4 – (Full Eagle-Dolphin Type): Silver Drachm of Istros (400-350 BC)

18.8 x 17.5 mm, 5.64g, 12/6h. Obv: Facing male heads, left inverted. Rev: ΙΣΤΡΙΑ; Sea eagle grasping dolphin; control letter A below. SNG Black Sea 240; AMNG 1416. Ex: Pars Coins, 2002.



Figure 5 – (Full Eagle-Dolphin Type): Bronze AE36 Cast Aes of Olbia (400-350 BC)

37.1 x 36.3 mm, 18.81g, 12h. Obv: Gorgoneion. Rev: O-ΛB-I-(O); Sea eagle grasping dolphin with talons. SNG Black Sea 396; SNG Cop 74. Ex: Gorney & Mosch, 2011 and V Auctions, 2012.

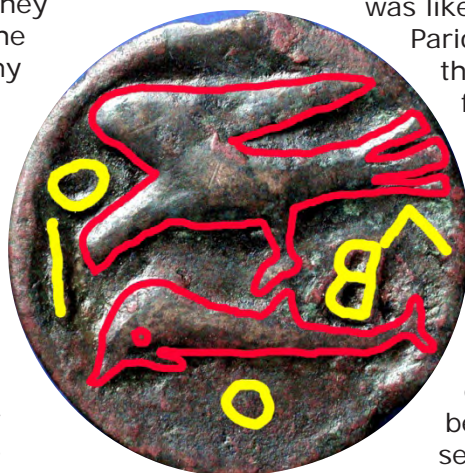
3. Olbia.

Olbia was located on a river estuary in the northwest corner of the Black Sea, near the entrance to the Dnieper River (in present-day Ukraine). In fact, this was a very strategic location that allowed it to export grain, fish and slaves to Greece, while importing Greek goods for the Scythian tribes to the north. Olbia's commercial enterprises were so successful that they endured for a thousand years until the 4th Century AD (however the economy declined drastically after the 3rd Century BC).

Descendants of the all Ionian Greeks revered the cult of Apollo and honored the dolphin for its service to the god. The Olbian colonists dedicated a significant temple to Apollo and they cast endless varieties of small dolphin-shaped bronzes that may have originally been used as temple tokens. The little dolphins, which are readily available for purchase today, may have also been used at some point as a form of money. More importantly, Olbia minted silver and bronze coins with the eagle-grasping-dolphin design starting in the early 4th Century BC. The rare and unusual Olbian silver stater depicted a facing, spread-winged eagle holding a dolphin instead of the standard side-view of the eagle. However the bronzes minted by Olbia consisted of a series

of very large cast coins in two sizes - 36mm and 70mm - showing a gorgon head on the obverse and an eagle-grasping-dolphin on the reverse. These coins are quite spectacular even if they are in bronze rather than silver. I recently obtained an example of the 36 mm issue from Germany (see Figure 5).

It has been noted elsewhere that the 'gorgoneion', or facing gorgon head, of the Olbian bronze issues was likely copied from the small coins of Parion. The eagle-dolphin design on the reverse was no-doubt copied from the silver drachms of Sinope and Istros. Being cast, the coins are quite crude with little detail, but the image is bold and unmistakable. The 'ethnic', or lettering of the city name, is often faint or incomplete given the nature of the casting process (why any of this material even exists after all this time is beyond the imagination). On a separate photo of my coin's reverse, I have outlined the placement of the ethnic lettering, since it is not always clear. These large bronze coins are extraordinary not only for their size and their relationship to other eagle-grasping-dolphin



**Detail of Olbia Reverse
Outlining Eagle-Dolphin
Type and City Name
"O - L - B - I - O"**

issues, but also because they are among the first (if not the first) bronze coins produced in the Greek territories. Bronze coinage began in Sicily only a few decades before the time that these Olbian bronzes may have started production around 400

BC. Large Greek bronzes are only otherwise found in a few places such as Sicily, Egypt, Pantikapaion and Baktria. Mainstream Greek cities and the Macedonian Empire never really bothered with them.

B. Other Coins Featuring Dolphins

Aside from the three noted Black Sea colonies, the dolphin was not often used as a main type in Greek coinage. In some coin issues a small dolphin was sometimes added as a control mark or auxiliary design element. Otherwise dolphins usually appeared as a supporting figure to denote the maritime connections of a city that was near the sea and that relied on fishing, long distance trade by ship, or perhaps a mythical relationship to a god. Let's face it there was often also some gratuitous dolphin exploitation, where a curvaceous dolphin or two would be included simply to add another level of style to a simple design. People still go crazy when they see a dolphin on a coin – I wonder what Sigmund Freud would say about that!

1. Byzantion

Byzantion was one of the few mints outside the Black Sea to use a dolphin as a main design element. It was a major trading city on the narrow Bosphorus - at the very edge of the Black Sea - linking the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea (the gateway to Greece). The city is in present-day

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Turkey and was later renamed Constantinople, and then Istanbul. Byzantion featured a dolphin on the obverse of its drachm and tetradrachm, but the design showed a heifer standing on a dolphin rather than an eagle grasping a dolphin - see



Figure 6 – (Featuring Dolphins): Bosporus - Drachm of Byzantion (340-320 BC)

18.5 x 16.3 mm, 5.4 g. Obv: Heifer standing on dolphin. Rev: BY; Quadripartite punch.
Ex: Calgary Coin, 2003.

my example of a drachm of this type in Figure 6 (my tetradrachm is in *The Planchet*, Nov 2011). The heifer was used on the obverse because it was important to the founding mythology of the city. The Byzantion drachms and tetradrachms are contemporary with, or slightly later than, the other eagle-dolphin coins that are the subject of this article. The size and weight of the Byzantion drachm is similar to the two later drachms featured from Sinope and Istros, however all three are a bit lighter in weight than the archaic drachm of Sinope noted in Figure 2. The weights of the drachms are no-doubt similar since they were all minted within the neighborhood of the Black Sea, and since Byzantion was the funnel through which the cities conducted trade with Greece.

2. Southern Italy and Sicily

Another region where dolphins appeared in a rare major role was on the reverse side of a few coins from southern Italy and Sicily during the 4th – 3rd Centuries. The main centers using the dolphin were the Greek colonial city-states of Taras, Brundisium, and Syracuse. It should also be noted however, that the Sicilian city of Messina placed a very artistic dolphin below the hare on many of its leaping hare tetradrachm issues. Although the dolphin type is the most desirable of the Messina tetradrachms, the design was not used for the whole series and I will leave it off the major-role list (besides, after years of trying I haven't yet managed to possess one so there are some sour grapes at play here).

Taras produced its very long sequence of popular boy-riding-dolphin silver didrachm issues, while Brundisium issued bronzes with a similar design for a very short time near the end of this period (see my examples of both coins in Figures 7 and 8). The Spartan inhabitants of Taras used the dolphin to illustrate a foundation myth for the settlement – the myth where the dolphin rescues the mythical founder named Taras from the sea. The series at Taras was a predominant coinage of the area from archaic times through the pre-Roman period; it is also one of the most recognizable coinages today, so new ancients collectors find it appealing. The Greek colony of Brentesion (meaning 'deer head' for the shape of the harbor), or Brundisium in Latin, copied the boy-on-dolphin type of Taras for its limited series of bronzes struck after Rome took control of the city in 244 BC (likely during the Second Punic War). Because of its location in the geography of the Empire, Brundisium became a major center for Roman naval power and trade with its territories in the eastern Mediterranean.

Syracuse was set apart from the two mainland colonies of Taras and Brundisium noted above. It was located on the southwest coast of the Island of Sicily, and it developed a very important and substantial silver coinage early in the 5th Century BC (see my article on early Sicilian coinage in *The Planchet*, Jan/Feb 2012). The tyrant rulers of Syracuse began minting bronze coins soon after such coinage was invented in the western part of the Island, including a large bronze drachm under Dionysios I circa 395 BC (my example is shown in Figure 9). Two arching dolphins are shown on



Figure 7 – (Featuring Dolphins): Southern Italy - Stater of Taras (302-281 BC)

21.0 mm, 7.95 g, 2h. Obv: Nude horseman holding shield. Rev: TAPAΣ; Taras riding dolphin. Ex: Davisson, 1999.



Figure 8 – (Featuring Dolphins): Southern Italy - Sextans of Brundesium (circa 215 BC)

28.0 mm, 14.84 g, 7h. Obv: Head of Poseidon with Nike and trident. Rev: BRVN; Youth riding dolphin holding Nike and kithara; Ex: Atlantis Coins, 2004.

the reverse of the drachm as the main type, both because the Syracusians promoted the cult of Apollo (they had erected a large temple to Apollo in the city center on the island of Ortygia) and because they would have found the double dolphin design irresistibly artistic. The dolphins surround either a sea star or an octopus, which conveniently fills the central gap in the design, completing the maritime theme. The bronze drachm of Syracuse became the standard and the model used by other city-states for their own issues, and it was

also over-struck with new types by cities and mercenaries during times of conflict. This is a popular coin because it is large and heavy, and of course because it has the two big dolphins on it.

In Closing...

By recognizing and collecting coins of similar type from different mint locations, it is possible to trace commercial and cultural linkages or affinities. Such is the case with the three Black



Figure 9 – (Featuring Dolphins): Sicily – Drachm of Syracuse (circa 395 BC)

30.0 mm, 29.3 g, 11h. Obv: ΣΥΡΑ; Head of Athena in wreathed Corinthian helmet. Rev: Octopus or sea star between two dolphins. Ex: Sandroc, 2002.

Sea communities of Sinope, Istros and Olbia. It is also interesting to consider how the treatment of one coin type can vary given local conventions, and how that same design can evolve over time. This is dramatically demonstrated in Sinope, where a crude (or inspired, depending on your view) archaic eagle head-dolphin coin type was transformed, within the span of a few decades, into an accomplished, figurative scene of a sea eagle-grasping-dolphin. This successful design was then replicated by its sister communities who also prospered on the edge of the known world.

We will never know precisely why the eagle-on-dolphin device was chosen for the three Black Sea trading partners: was it derived from myth or was it merely art? The unique emblem must have helped define the three remote communities in some way. From a numismatic point of view, we can also certainly appreciate the unusual visual appeal of any of the surviving eagle-on-dolphin coins that we may encounter.

Photo & Map Credits:

Figure 1 - Map heavily adapted from Bulgarian Center for Not-For-Profit Law website.

Figures 2 to 9 - Photos by the author.

All coins from the Author's Collection and taken by the author.

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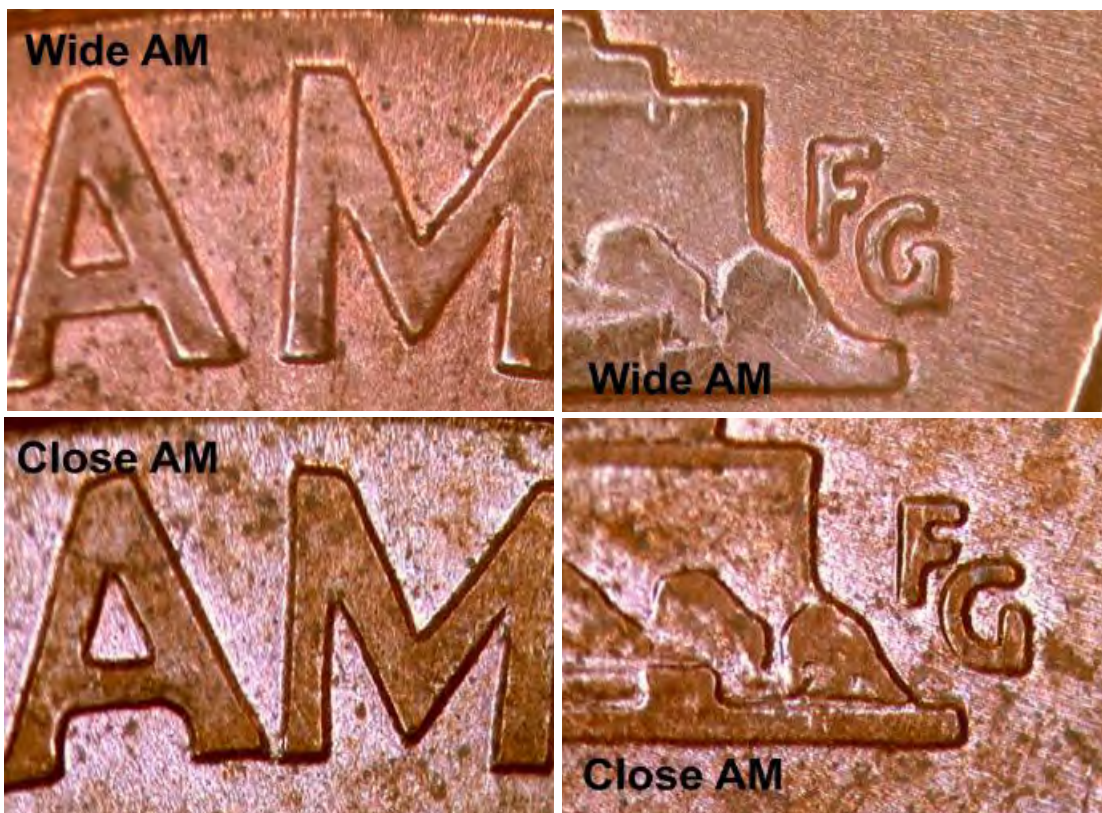


1992D Close AM Varsity US 1-Cent

The regular issue of 1992 Denver cents were minted with the reverse of 1992, where the AM in "AMERICA" has a wider space between the letters. These hold the common reverse where 4.4 billion were minted. A new reverse was planned to be issued on the following year's coins in 1993, where the AM was closer together. A worker at the mint mistakenly used the reverse die for 1993 in 1992 and some of these mule coins escaped the mint in with the regular coinage.

Another marker to help identify the Close and Wide AM reverse can be found in the designer's initials, to the right of the Lincoln Memorial. In the Wide AM variety the G in FG has serifs, while the Close AM does not. If you are lucky enough to come across one of these extreme modern rarities, you might want to think about taking it to an auction.

At a recent Heritage Auction a PCGS MS-64 Red, Close AM 1992 D cent was sold for an astounding \$20,700. Several other years of Lincoln cents have a Wide AM and Close AM varieties, but none have reached the same heights as the 1992D. For a complete listing refer to *A Guide Book of United States Coins*, by R.S. Yeoman.



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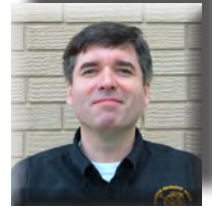
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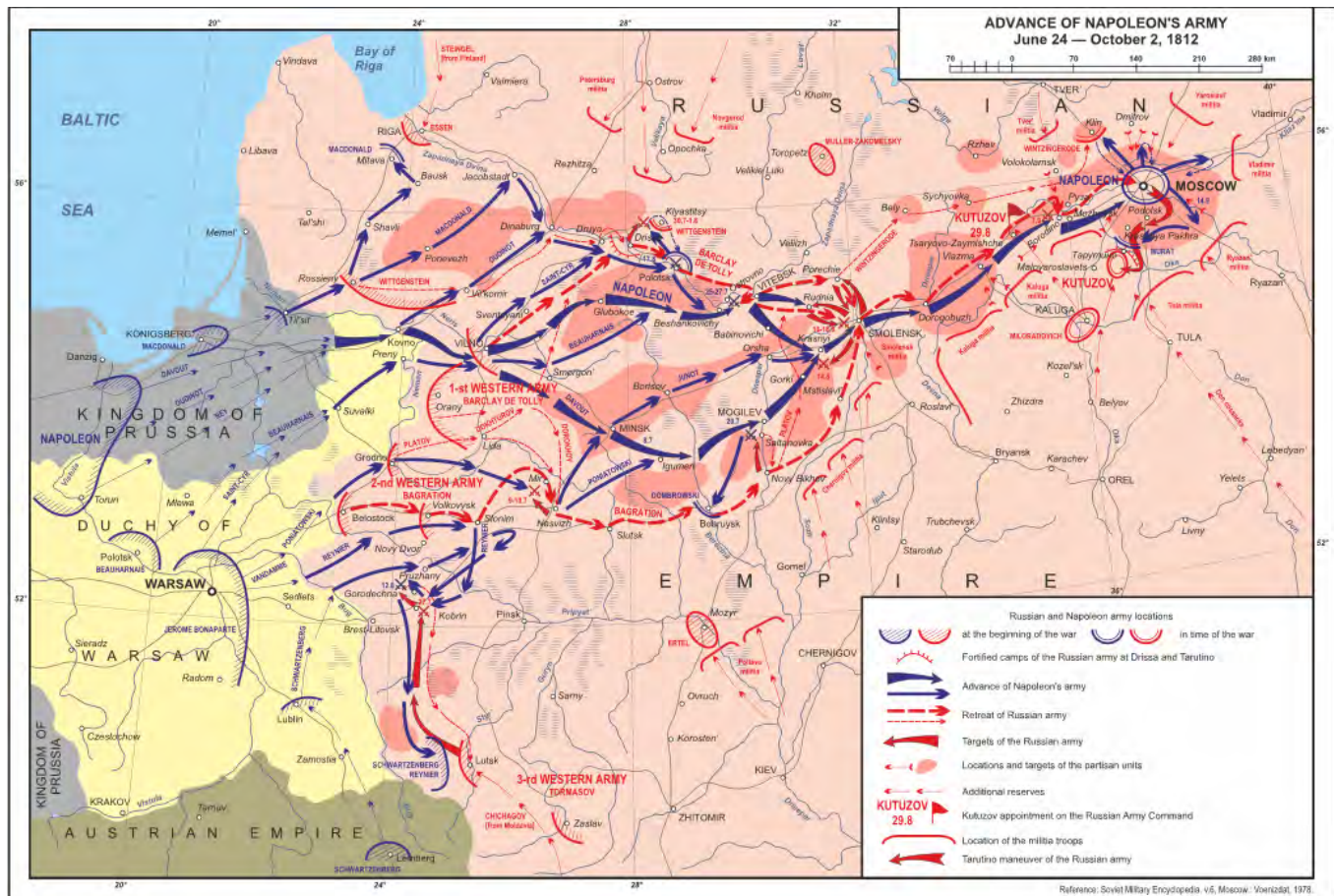


1812 - AN 'ANNUS MOMENTUS' part 1

By Pierre Driessen



As the newly minted United States of America invaded the territories of British North America, future Canada, in an ill-fated opportunistic attempt to exploit Britain's preoccupation with its fight for survival against its arch-rival France, events in Europe came to a head. The centuries old struggle between these two powers entered a new phase, from which one would emerge as the world's first global super power.



On 23 June 1812, Napoléon Bonaparte, Europe's most powerful ruler, ordered the crossing of the Niemen River, the border between French controlled Europe and the Russian Empire. The Emperor of the French ordered the invasion of Russia, because it was the only European power that stood in the way of his dominance of the continent. The invasion was also an indirect way to strike at Great Britain. If Russia was brought under French dominance or conquered outright, Britain would be isolated, and the French could turn the resources of the continent against the island nation in the final showdown for world domination.

Napoléon's action to invade the territories of his Russian counterpart Tzar Alexander I was not taken on a whim but was the culmination of a carefully planned process. It was also the consequence of the diametrically opposed political, military and territorial ambitions of each ruler.

Since the reign of Peter I (1672 - 1725), the Great, Russia had become increasingly powerful. Under Catherine II (1729 - 1796), the Great, the Russian Empire made major territorial acquisitions in all directions. This increased power and territorial expansion translated into increased influence in



Print showing the Grande Armée crossing the River Niemen, the border between the French and Russian Empires, on 23 - 24 June 1812. By John Heaveside Clark (1770 - 1863), McGill Universities Libraries.

the political and military spheres of the European continent. It brought Russia into direct conflict at times with Sweden, Prussia, Austria, the Ottoman Empire, Poland and France.

Following the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and the execution of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793, as the ideals of the Revolution were exported with the bayonet beyond the borders of France, Russia became the bulwark of the absolutist monarchist camp. Russian armies fought in support of hard-pressed monarchies in attempts to contain French aggression. As the Revolution transformed into the Directory and finally the First French Empire, led by the charismatic French General Napoléon Bonaparte, Russian support became increasingly important for the monarchies of Europe.

Things came to a head on 2 December 1805 at the Battle of Austerlitz, also known as the Battle of the Three Emperors, arguably Napoléon's tactical battlefield masterpiece. The allied Russians and Austrians suffered a bloody and humiliating defeat. Austria almost immediately sued for peace and withdrew from her alliance with Russia.

Subsequent to Austerlitz, the utter defeat of the Prussians on 14 October 1806 at the Battles of Jena and Auerstädt, the further defeat of the Russians at the Battle of Friedland on 14 June 1807 and the refusal of the British to open a second front by invading the Baltic despite pleadings from Tzar Alexander I, left the Russians isolated. Napoléon had fundamentally changed the balance of power on the continent, occupying all lands as far east as the Niemen River, the border with Russia.

Napoléon and the Grande Armée appeared invincible, so before it was too late, the Russians rushed to conclude a truce. Despite his pride and the resistance from a large part of his officer corps and the court, seeing no alternative, the Tzar agreed to peace negotiations. The results were the Treaties of Tilsit 7 - 9 July 1807, completed amongst the greatest political theatre. Although officially concluded among France, Russia and Prussia, the later state was for all intents and purposes a spectator, while the two titans decided its fate.

This medal is the first in a series issued in chronological order by the Paris Medal Mint during the reign of Napoléon which followed the progress of the Russian Campaign. They visually celebrated the victories of French arms and tried to explain the reason for the ultimate failure of the venture.



Obverse of the medal entitled 'Prise de Wilna' celebrating the capture of Vilna, the Lithuanian capital on 28 June 1812. The city had been evacuated by the Tzar and his court in haste, the Russians offered resistance in the form of a rear-guard action as the army retreated. The Russians destroyed the bridge over the River Vilna, and burned the stores of ammunition, winter clothing and food stuffs. The medal shows the right facing bust of Napoléon Bonaparte, depicted as Augustus, with the laurel wreath of a victorious Roman general. The legend reads: NAPOLÉON EMP. ET ROI. (Napoleon Emperor and King). The signature of the engraver, Bertrand Andrieu (1761 - 1822) one of the Paris Medal Mint's foremost medallic artists, appears on the truncation of the bust.

Medal statistics: diameter: 41mm; weight: 37 g; composition: bronzed copper; edge: raised and plain; relief: high.

References: Bramsen: 1156; Julius: 2515; d'Essling: 1367; Zeits: 125.



Reverse of the medal entitled 'Prise de Wilna' celebrating the capture of Vilna, the Lithuanian capital on 28 June 1812. Shows Napoleon, standing facing left in the uniform of the Grenadier à Pied, the star of the Legion d'honneur on the left side of his chest. He is shown disarming two soldiers dressed in traditional Russian and Polish dress. These warriors are symbolic for the city of Vilna, which was the administrative capital of the Polish territories under Russian control. It is important to note the difference in appearance of Napoléon and the Russian and Polish warriors. Napoléon is clean cut and shaven, in a modern uniform. The warriors in contrast have long hair, are bearded and dressed in customs with fur. Their weapons, a shield and scimitar, are antiquated. The scene represents Napoléon, like the Roman Emperor Augustus, bringing peace and civilization to the barbarians of the Polish and Russian Steps.

Prussia effectively ceased to exist. It lost a third of its territory, almost half of its subjects and was forced to pay an enormous indemnity, set at 120 million francs. Until this was paid, key Prussian fortresses would be occupied, and Prussia was obliged to pay for the support of 150,000 French troops. The once proud Prussian army was reduced to 42,000 men, little more than a police force. The consequences of these humiliations and enormous burdens, against which the French Minister of

Foreign Affairs Talleyrand warned, would come to haunt Napoléon in the not too distant future.

All Frederick William III (1770 - 1840) could do was watch, as his kingdom of Prussia was dismembered, despite the best efforts of his wife, the Amazon-like Queen Luise (1776 – 1810), in trying to work her feminine powers of persuasion on the French victor on behalf of her people.



Kingdom of Prussia (1701–1918)
1818 Frederick William III of Prussia (1770 –1840) - Gold

The French and Russian emperors met in an ornate tent pavilion on a raft in the middle of the River Niemen. Inspections of each other's honour guards followed, along with lavish dinners and parties. Many promises of friendship and mutual support

were made; neither side really believed anything said or promised.

Napoléon however, thought that he had gained the upper hand and would be able to charm, intimidate and coerce the mercurial and vain young Tzar Alexander I into doing his bidding. He was very much mistaken. For the time being, the two greatest European powers had fought each other to a stalemate, which sooner or later would have to be broken. Each side tried to gain as much territory and as many concessions as possible. Europe was divided between them. An uneasy armistice was created with the veneer of a treaty, in which promises were made, which neither side in truth expected to respect; the question was when would it be broken and by which power. Before the ink was dry on the official treaty documents, the anti-French camp at the court in St. Petersburg, supported by British gold, had begun its campaign to undermine it, led by Maria Feodorovna (1757 – 1828), the fiercely anti-French mother of the Tzar.

The Treaties of Tilsit sowed the seeds of future conflicts, as Russia had to make major concessions, many of which were against her interests. She was forced to recognize the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which was created out of Polish territories seized from Prussia, and placed under the nominal control of the King of Saxony as its Grand Duke. Historic enemies, Russia had long resisted the re-emergence of a Polish state. Russia also recognized the recent game of thrones, which Napoléon had engaged in by making his brothers kings. Joseph became King of Naples, Louis King of

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Holland and Jerome King of Westphalia, a state yet to be created from the lands of western Prussia and the English possessions in Germany, namely Hanover. Russia also recognized the Confederation of the Rhine and thus French dominance in German affairs. Russia also agreed to mediate a peace between France and Britain. If Britain failed to agree to the terms offered by France, according to the secret article of the treaty, Russia would ally with France against Britain. This was a certainty, since Napoléon knew the British would never agree to his terms.

In turn, Russia gained part of New East Prussia and Napoléon's assurance of mediation with the Ottoman Empire. Russia would also be allowed a free hand against Sweden in regard to Finland. Russia did not get much, and Alexander tried to make the best of a bad situation. He stopped the French at his borders and thus bought time. Since the victor dictates the terms, it is also up to the victor, as in any negotiation, to leave enough for all parties. Here Napoléon failed miserably, despite the best advice of his ministers, especially Talleyrand. He was a bad winner, the extent of which shocked many, French and foreigner alike. It is the one-sided nature of the treaties and the vindictiveness of the treatment of Prussia, which doomed everything.

From the start, relations between the two emperors, despite official protestations of friendship, were strained and fraught with mutual suspicion. They both considered themselves the leader of Europe, there could only be one. For the time being Napoléon had the upper hand, but for how long, as matters were beginning to spin out of control in many parts of his empire.

Alexander avoided forming any close ties with Napoléon, rejecting the latter's overtures in the search for a new wife when asked for the hand of his sister, the Grand Duchess Anna Pavlovna (1795 - 1865), with the excuse that she was too young. Rebuffed, Napoléon then made a dynastic alliance with the Hapsburg Empire through marriage in April 1810, with Her Imperial Highness



***Empress Marie-Louise (1791-1847),
second wife of Napoleon I, daughter of
Emperor Franz I of Austria.
Canvas. By Francois Gerard,
Louvre, Département des Peintures,
Paris, France***

the Archduchess Marie-Louise (1791 - 1847). This worried Alexander, since it appeared to permanently remove a major ally from the anti-Bonaparte camp. Furthermore, the Austrians traditionally competed with Russia for influence in the Balkans, the Polish lands, German affairs and Central Europe.

Then in 1809, by the Treaty of Schönbrunn, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was enlarged with the addition of West Galicia. This raised Alexander's anxiety, for fear that Napoléon planned the restoration of the Polish state, a traditional enemy of Russia. In 1810, a personal insult was inflicted on Alexander, when Napoléon deposed the Duke of Oldenburg and annexed the tiny state to the French Empire. In its own right this was a small and insignificant duchy in the northwestern part of Germany, except for the fact that its duke was his uncle. It was a personal

and diplomatic slight, which could not be ignored.

In addition to the Polish question, the other main matter of contention was Napoléon's insistence that Russia fully implement the Continental System. This was a systematic policy of economic warfare against his arch-nemesis Britain, that 'nation of shopkeepers'. It was to be fought through the denial of European markets for British goods or goods transshipped through British ports. Since Britain was a trading nation, the policy was a knife aimed at her jugular. It threatened her trade and with that, the stability of her home market and colonies. The loss of market outlets caused unemployment to skyrocket and government tax revenues to plummet. Matters were further complicated by the fact that many of the markets lost also exported foodstuffs to Britain, causing dangerous food price inflation. All conspired to cause soaring rates of poverty, social unrest and the decline of government credit.

Russia was an important market for British manufactures. More significantly she was an important source of supplies for the Royal Navy, to build and maintain the fleet, and a vital supplier of corn, to feed her growing population.

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The unintended consequences of Napoléon's economic policies regarding the Continental System are very interesting, for the results were far more devastating for the states in continental Europe than Britain. Although causing hardships for the English, Britain developed other markets in South and Central America and increased trade with her colonies. States on the continent did not have that ability. It is said that the Mediterranean became a silent lake, and the Baltic trade all but dried-up. The economies of states such as Holland, which were entirely dependant on trade, collapsed. The Dutch fleet had been captured or destroyed and her colonies seized by Britain, many never to be returned after the Napoléonic conflicts had ended. Smuggling became rife, illegally or with official connivance. Many high officials made fortunes profiting from this trade, including Napoléon.

More than any other policy imposed by Napoléon, it is the Continental System, affecting all strata of society, which caused hatred for and eventual revolt against French hegemony in Europe. It also made any form of rapprochement with Britain impossible.

In addition to the political, military, territorial conflicts and personal affronts, the Continental System caused such strain on Russia's economy, the hardships borne by her common people to be so great, the clamouring of her merchant class to become so loud and the loss of income for her aristocracy to become so severe that on 31 December 1810, Alexander I broke the Treaty of Tilsit. By decree, he imposed high import duties on all French luxury goods and reopened Russian ports to British commerce. This shattered the united front against the English and represented a major breach of Napoléon's Continental System. The Tzar began to communicate with other European rulers whose states were being ruined by Napoléon's policies in an attempt to unite against French oppression.

If Napoléon wished Russia to rejoin the Continental System, Alexander set certain conditions, namely: French withdrawal from all Prussian territories, compensation for the seizure of the Duchy of Oldenburg and the creation of a buffer zone

between the French and Russian empires through the evacuation of all territories east of the Elbe River. These were designed to inflame Napoléon's anger, and Alexander knew they would be rejected. They were diametrically opposed to Napoléon's strategy in the east, for it meant sacrificing the puppet state of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. This state was a French dominated buffer against any sudden Russian movements and a valuable source of recruits for French armies. If agreed to, these demands would have handed dominance in the region to Russia. In addition there were no guarantees that Alexander would honor his word.

Napoléon countered with his own half-hearted attempts to repair the rift, but on 18 February 1811, ordered Clarke (1765 - 1818), his Minister of War, to begin the preparations for a full-scale campaign against Russia. This was despite the objections and warnings from many quarters, including Clarke and the chief of staff Berthier (1753 - 1815), against such a venture. Two notably attempts to dissuade the Emperor, at great personal risk, were made by Armand de Caulaincourt (1773 - 1823), French ambassador to Russia. He warned Napoléon of the harsh Russian weather, especially winter, the severity of which was something completely unfathomable to a western European's imagination. He also warned of the vastness of Russia, the complete lack of roads, bridges or other infrastructure. He also informed his master that Alexander and his advisors had made a close study of the quagmire the French found themselves in on the Iberian Peninsula and the fierce and unorthodox tactics of the Spanish guerrillas.

It is in the memoirs of General de Marbot (1782 - 1854) that the description of the most eloquent attempt to dissuade Napoléon from invading Russia is found. This valiant effort was made by Lieutenant-Colonel of Engineers de Ponthon. This officer had been seconded to the Russian army after Tilsit. While serving in Russia he had filed highly detailed reports. For his expertise, he was assigned to the Emperor's Topographic Office, which was preparing maps of Russia. Frequently questioned by Napoléon about his Russian experiences, Ponthon quickly grasped the significance. When asked for his judgement on aspects of a potential campaign, he stated:

"Sire, such a war carries with it terrible dangers. Conquered peoples will never be your true allies. The immensity of the Russian theatre changes the facts of war. You would advance into wilderness where you would find neither food nor forage. With the first rains, the terrain becomes impassable and if the campaign drags on into winter, how will your

*troops withstand temperatures of minus twenty or thirty degrees."*¹

Napoléon listened without saying a word. Then the colonel dropped to his knees in front of the Emperor and pleaded with him: *"Sire, in the name of the prosperity of France and of your glory, I implore you, abandon this war."*²

Napoléon appears to have seriously weighed de Ponthon's words, and from his mannerisms, some officers were concluding that the campaign would be shelved. After several days of reflection and consultations with senior officers, he regained his confidence and ordered affairs to move forward.

On the diplomatic and political front, Napoléon had made some very bad missteps, the result of his ever-increasing dictatorial tendencies and belief in the invincibility of his own abilities and judgement. These judgements and actions would greatly hamper his forthcoming campaign.

On 21 August 1810, Sweden's parliament, the Riksdag, elected Jean Baptiste Jules Bernadotte (1763 - 1844), a Marshal of France, heir-presumptive to the throne of Sweden. In their search for a successor to the childless King Charles XIII (1748 - 1818), the Swedes found it prudent to elect one agreeable to the most powerful man in Europe, Napoléon Bonaparte. In turn Napoléon envisioned the benefits of having a pliable Frenchman on the throne of this country. It would further strengthen the Continental System by closing even more ports and markets to British commerce. Sweden, a major power in the Baltic region, was an important supplier of trees for masts, pitch and other provisions vital to keeping Britain's 'wall of wood' in operational order. This had the potential to deal a mortal blow to British efforts in their struggle against France.

Napoléon miscalculated yet again. Relations between the two men had never been on the best footing. Bernadotte felt underappreciated and slighted, having been outmaneuvered by Napoléon in the competition for supremacy in the French political structure. A relation by marriage, his wife was the sister of the wife of Joseph Bonaparte, and a hero of the revolution Napoléon made him a Marshal of the Empire in 1804. Following the 1806 Prussian Campaign, he had been sidelined from active duty on suspicion of actively working against Napoléon's interests.

He failed to support Marshal Davout (1770 - 1823) at Auerstädt against the main body of the Prussian army, although he was in sight of the battle and could see that the French forces were greatly outnumbered. Despite this betrayal, Davout's skill and the tenacity and discipline of the common French soldier turned what could easily have been a devastating defeat into a great victory, a victory, which crushed the proud Prussian army and destroyed its reputation for invincibility enjoyed since the days of Frederick the Great (1712 - 1786).

Upon assuming his position as heir-presumptive, Bernadotte quickly became the most powerful and popular man in Sweden, ruling the country in all but name for the ailing Charles XIII. Napoléon tried to treat Sweden as a client state, just like he did the countries his relatives and client rulers administered. He tried to subordinate the country's domestic and foreign policies to the interests of the French Empire. He attempted to force Sweden, a country that had tried to remain neutral during the titanic struggle between Britain and France, to fully adopt and adhere to the Continental System. In addition, Sweden was forced to declare war on Britain in 1810. To say the least, relations were strained, but Sweden was unwilling to anger Napoléon and made half-hearted attempts to comply.

The complete break came in January 1812, when the French re-occupied Swedish Pomerania and Rügen. The former is a sliver of land located on the German Baltic coast, while the latter is an island off the coast of Pomerania. These had previously

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been occupied from 1807-10 and evacuated when Bernadotte became Sweden's crown prince. This drove Bernadotte into the welcoming arms of Alexander, with whom he made a secret agreement. Old enmities, especially Sweden's loss of Finland to Russian conquest in 1809, were forgotten. In the Treaty of St. Petersburg of April 1812, in exchange for joining the anti-Napoléon camp, Russia promised to allow Sweden to annex Norway, at the time a part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Another unfortunate occurrence, which took Napoléon completely off guard, was Russia's conclusion of peace with the Ottoman Empire by the Treaty of Bucharest on 28 May 1812. This allowed for the redeployment of Russia's southern armies to face the French. In June, Britain formalized the understanding, which had existed since Russia broke with France, and made peace with Sweden and Russia.

Another surprising aspect of Napoléon's pre-invasion preparations was the almost complete lack of reliable intelligence about Russian territory and preparedness. Napoléon also failed to grasp the changing nature of the Russian army. Alexei Arakchev (1769 - 1834), Minister of War, set in motion a sweeping reorganization and modernization of every aspect of Russia's military. Lessons were drawn from the defeats, and a

process was begun for the adoption of many of the organizational and tactical ideas, which had made France's Revolutionary and Napoléonic armies so successful. The reforms were continued under his successor General Barclay de Tolly (1761 - 1818).

The Russian artillery park was increased to 1700 pieces and improved through the introduction of lighter 6 and 12 pound field pieces and modern howitzers. This allowed for massed artillery batteries, one of Napoléon's signatures. Training in marksmanship and bayonet charges were introduced. Conditions for the common soldier were improved. Organizationally smaller, mobile, self-contained divisions were created, which resembled small armies with their own artillery, infantry and cavalry. These would be capable of operating independently or in cooperation with other divisions to form larger army groups.

All these Russian reforms were beginning to bear fruit just as the French army was fundamentally changing. The depth of knowledge and experience of the French army was deteriorating due to the loss of so many French veteran officers and soldiers after more than 20 years of almost continuous warfare. France was the most populous nation in Europe at the time, but its reserves of manpower fit for military service were being depleted at an alarming rate. For the campaign, most of the French contingents consisted of recruits from the conscriptions of 1811 and 1812. They had never campaigned, and the 1812 recruits were untrained. It had become increasingly acceptable for potential recruits to avoid conscription through various means, fleeing into the hills, mountains and forests or into marriage, since married men were exempt. The marriage rate skyrocketed, with young men, no more than 18 years old taking women of 60 or older as brides.³ Through ever more draconian means, Napoleon's recruiters were still able to fill the ranks.

Many of Napoléon's companions in arms from the old days, often the best and most experienced commanders, such as Lannes (1769 - 1809), were dead. Other top commanders were absent, deployed in other theatres, especially the Spanish ulcer which was tying down over 300,000 troops and Marshals Suchet (1170 - 1826) and Masséna (1758 - 1817) and thus making them unavailable for the forthcoming struggle.

The very character of the Grande Armée had also changed; as its core of French soldiers became smaller, it had to be replenished with recruits from client and satellite states, many of whom were less than enthusiastic serving the French cause. The exception were the Poles, under Marshal

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Poniatowski (1763 - 1813), who saw Napoléon as their champion and were motivated by the promise of the restoration of their independent kingdom, a promise Napoléon never intended to make a reality. As a result, the French were forced to go back to the early Revolutionary tactics of huge, unwieldy massed columns and divisions.

Gone were the days of the brilliant, lightening fast, nimble and elegant tactics, which had been hallmarks of earlier Napoléonic tactics and strategy. Instead, the Emperor and his commanders were forced to resort to the blunt sledgehammer approach.

This was compounded by the lack of any appreciation of the character of the Russian peasants. Brutalized, kept in servitude and in many respects treated as less than slaves, Napoléon expected them to rise en masse and flock to his cause. He never understood the mystical nature of the relationship between the Tzar and his lowliest subjects. The Russian people would be fighting for God, Mother Russia and the Little Father, in essence their hearths and families, motivations powerful and difficult to overcome.

The consequence was that Napoléon at the start of the Russian Campaign, faced a very different adversary than he had in 1805-06, and the instrument at his disposal was also vastly different. The Russians would prove to have learned their lessons well; combining these with the adoption of the guerrilla and scorch-earth tactics as used in Spain, they would give Napoléon a very bloody nose.

The preparations of the French general staff under Clarke and Berthier were exhaustive. The largest army since the Roman Empire was assembled. Estimates for the actual size of the Grande Armée for this campaign range from 612,000 to 675 thousand, depending if garrison and other auxiliary troops are counted. Made up of many diverse peoples, drawn from every corner of the Grand French Empire, it was a true Babel.

The infantry was composed of 275 French and 291 allied and client state battalions. The cavalry was composed of 219 French and 261 allied and client state battalions. This made a total of 515,000 infantry and foot artillery, 98,400 cavalry and horse artillery. The artillery park consisted of 130

heavy siege guns and 1,242 field artillery pieces of every calibre. In addition, more than 25,000 civilians, servants, prostitutes and camp followers accompanied the army. It was a mobile nation with everything needed to keep an army functioning - smithies, bakeries, cobbler and carpenter shops.



**Kingdom of Westphalia,
Jérôme Bonaparte
(1807-1813),
20 Franken 1809**



The 450,000 First Line troops, directed by Napoléon, were divided into 3 armies. The Emperor himself commanded the 250,000 strong First Army. It was composed of 3 infantry corps commanded by Marshal Davout, 2 cavalry corps commanded by the Emperor's brother-in-law, King Murat of Naples (1767 - 1815), Oudinot's (1767 - 1848) II Corps, Marshal Ney's (1769 - 1815) III Corps and the Imperial Guard.

The Old Guard was commanded by Lefebvre (1755 - 1820), while the Guard cavalry was commanded by Bessières (1768 - 1813). Even the elite body of the Guard had to be augmented, for lack of suitable replacements, with the Young Guard commanded by Mortier (1768 - 1835).

Offering close support for this main body were two auxiliary armies. The first, commanded by the Emperor's youngest brother King Jérôme of Westphalia, was 70,000 strong and composed of Westphalians, Saxons, Hessians and Poles. The 80,000 strong second army, under the titular command of the Emperor's stepson, Viceroy Prince Eugène de Beauharnais (1781 - 1824), was made-up mostly of Italians and Bavarians.

Two semi-autonomous armies protected the flanks of the main and support armies. Guarding the left flank along the Baltic coast was Marshal MacDonald's (1765 - 1840) X Corps. The 30,000 strong Austrian Corps, under Prince Schwarzenberg (1771 - 1820), covered the right or southern flank.

Forming the second line to backup these first line troops was a massive reserve of 165,000 men from which replacements would be drawn for the main and two auxiliary armies. This included Marshal Victor's (1764 - 1841) 33,000 strong IX Corps.

The multi-ethnic composition of this massive force is fascinating. In the first and second lines were 302,000 'Frenchmen'. This can be deceiving, since the classification "Frenchmen" included troops from states, which comprised the French Empire. These were states under direct Imperial French administration, such as Holland, Belgium and the Kingdom of Italy. A further 190,000 troops came from the Swiss cantons, Hapsburg territories, Prussia and the German states. The Poles and Lithuanians provided a further 90,000 men, while Spain, Portugal and Illyria, lands along the eastern Adriatic coast, another 32,000.

There was a final reserve of 60,000 men, the XI Corps commanded by Marshal Augereau (1757 - 1816), which was made up of garrison troops left at Danzig and stations along the Vistula River.

An army this size could not, as had been the case in previous campaigns, live completely off the land. Vast stores of supplies and provisions were stockpiled. Collected were twenty million rations of bread, 20 million tons of rice, 2 million bushels of oats, to name but a few items, not to mention vast quantities of boots, uniforms and ammunitions. These supplies were to be carried on soldiers' backs and in carts. A total of 32,700 official army wagons, carts and caissons were used. The transportation corps, artillery park and cavalry would require more than of 300,000 horses, many of which were requisitioned from farms, especially in the German states, as the various army units advanced to their marshalling areas in East Prussia and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Provisions for the troops and horses would be supplemented, as much as possible, through foraging from the land and stealing from the peasants.

Russia had considerable military resources, an army of 600,000 men. The vastness of the Russian Empire meant that these troops were engaged on many fronts and in garrison duties, thus making it difficult to concentrate at any one point to meet emergencies. To face the French forces arrayed against him, Alexander was initially able to bring 220,000 into the field. The First Army under Barclay de Tolly, based north of the French at Orissa on the River Düna, was 130,000 strong. The


Second Army, numbering 60,000 under Bagration (1765 - 1812), was south of the French near the vast Pripet Marshes. The rest were garrison troops.

It is not exactly understood why Napoléon delayed for so long before finally setting his army in motion.

One possibility may be that he did not want to leave his new Austrian wife Marie-Louise who had given birth on 20 March 1811 to his long desired son and heir, the King of Rome, so soon. Another possibility may be that he hoped to use intimidation against Tzar Alexander, who he reasoned would come to the negotiation table when learning of the sheer size of the forces arrayed against him. Unfortunately for hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians on both sides, Napoléon would and could not agree to Alexander's terms, and Alexander would and could not afford to be intimidated by Napoléon. The grand game was on.

On 9 May 1812, Napoleon left Paris for the east, and on 30 May, took personal command of the Grande Armée in East Prussia and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. The western borders of the Russian Empire were reached on June 23 at the River Niemen. Before a Frenchman set foot on Russian soil, several omens of bad luck were encountered. While scouting the Niemen at dawn, Napoléon was thrown from his horse. He exclaimed, "*That is a bad omen. A Roman would recoil.*"⁴ Later that same day, the skies suddenly darkened, and a violent thunderstorm brought heavy rain and flooding. However, nothing would stop the advance, not even nature. Despite a swollen Niemen, French engineers threw bridges over the river, and the army crossed on the 23 and 24 of June.

The sight of an army of this size on the move must have been awe-inspiring. Row upon row of soldiers in their colorful uniforms, the cuirasses of the cavalry gleaming in the sunlight mounted on their magnificent steeds and the officers covered in gold braid and fancy headdresses. However, for the farmers and townspeople of the districts the army was moving through, it would have been frightening and ruinous. Foraging, as it was euphemistically known, was nothing more than organized plunder, the severity and brutality determined by the extent of the need the army found itself in, the character of the commanders and their ability or determination to keep discipline. The overall policy of the army's top commanders to punish the local inhabitants or to keep them friendly also played a significant role in the amount of economic, physical, psychological and emotional trauma visited on a region. In the



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army's wake, a district could look like a plague of locusts had stripped it bare. The pace of march of a division of 10,000 loaded with their gear could on a good day average 15 leagues, this was however with veterans. The formation would stretch for 3 to 4 miles. ^{5, 6}

Once the Niemen was crossed, the army marched to Vilna, the capital of Lithuania. This march was a foretaste of what lay in store as the advance went deeper and deeper into Russian territory. After 48 hours on the move, the Grande Armée had lost 5000 horses, and there were more than 50,000 stragglers. Upon reaching the city of 40,000 inhabitants, the French discovered that the Russian military had hastily abandoned it. They had burned the supplies stored there and wrecked the bridges over the Vilna River. An actual action was limited to a clash between the French vanguard and the Russian rear-guard. On 30 June, Napoléon wrote to Marie-Louise, *"I am at Vilna and very busy. Things are going well, the enemy has been completely foiled. I am in fine health. I think of you. Vilna is a very fine town of 40,000 souls. I am in a very fine house where, until recently, the Emperor Alexander was lodged, never suspecting that I was so close behind him."* ⁷

On 1 July, de Balachof, the Tzar's Minister of Police, presented himself to Napoléon. Expressing the Tzar's surprise at the French invasion without a declaration of war, he had come with an offer. If the French retreated behind the Niemen, the Tzar would be prepared to immediately begin negotiations. The offer was rejected, as the Tzar knew it would be. ⁸ The die had been cast, and it would have been political suicide for Napoléon to have turned back at this stage. His prestige in France and amongst his client and allied states would have collapsed. His enemies would have rejoiced and united against him. He was keenly aware that his reputation as a victorious general was the foundation of his political power. If he wavered, his grip on power would slip. His career had been built on taking calculated risks, that was the life of a self-made general, and to date his gambles had succeeded, lifting him to the pinnacle of power in Europe. He did not have the luxury that his opponent Alexander had, the aura of ancient royalty, sanctioned by God and tradition.

The Emperor's strategy for the campaign was classic Napoléon, divide and conquer. The aim was to divide the Russian forces, then concentrate his own and attack each Russian army in turn, bringing overwhelming numbers to bear at the exact moment. Although many Russian officers and much of the court felt that the honour of Russia was at stake and the French should be met

head-on, this did not happen. Alexander, vacillating at times, prudently decided to leave the active management of the defence of his empire in the hands of his minister of war. At first, the strategy was to attack the French flanks, but when it was realized just how strong French forces were, de Tolly prudently decided not to give battle, but rather to retreat and draw the French deeper into Russian territory and to employ a scorched earth policy.

Napoléon, except for a few minor skirmishes and failed attempts to encircle Russian forces, was denied the great decisive battle he desired and as the campaign dragged on, so desperately needed. Not until he had advanced deep into Russian territory, stretching his supply lines, moving further and further from his supply bases, did the Russians finally decide to stand and fight. The story of that Pyrrhic victory is for another time. The Russian Campaign would become unlike any campaign Napoléon had fought before or would fight afterward, against an enemy he never came to understand, an enemy who did not fight according to the accepted standards of warfare of the time.

The Grande Armée was given 10 days rest at Vilin on 7 July the march into the heart of Russia resumed.

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8. *Ibid.*

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Coming Events

September 12, 2012 - ENS September Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. ENS Annual Pizza Night - Free for ENS members.

October 10, 2012 - ENS October Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Snacks provided.

November 10 & 11, 2012 - Edmonton's Coin Show and Sale, Edmonton Hotel & Conference Centre, 4520 - 76 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 0A5, dealers wishing to attend call 780-270-6312.

November 14, 2012 - ENS November Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Snacks provided.

December 12, 2012 - ENS December Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Annual member donated charity auction. Snacks provided.

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