

Did Sherritt Mint a Twoonie???

THE PLANCHET

EDMONTON NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

September 2011

Volume 58 Issue 7

European Museum Tour Ancient Greece



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THE PLANCHET

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The Planchet Team:

Editor-In-Chief: Roger Grove

Content Editor: Chris Hale

Co-Editors: Pierre Driessen & Marc Bink

On-Line Distribution: Pierre Driessen

Printing and Mailing: Howard Gilbey

ON THE COVER:

London British Museum entrance. Apollo Striding with Daimon on Arm (Nomos of Kaulonia, Italy) 6th C. BC. Reverse of Head of Apollo and Swan (Tetradrachm of Klazomenai, Asia Minor) 4th Cent BC. Photos courtesy of Wayne Hansen.

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 2011-12



Welcome back from holidays. I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer.

As fall approaches, there will be some exciting changes to Canadian numismatics. Some say they may be the biggest since 2001, when our coinage changed from nickel to steel.

Over the summer, the Bank of Canada unveiled its upcoming paper money series. You can expect to see the first \$100 notes arrive in November. Hopefully we can see them in time for our show.

It was really encouraging to hear some of the Bank of Canada's latest conclusions when it did the unveiling of these new polymer banknotes, stating that electronic banking has not diminished the demand for paper money. This disproves some theories that debit and credit cards would stop the need to continue printing and circulating money. We should have many more years of circulating coins and banknotes to collect, as fraud and the distrust of the banking institutions continues to ensure that banknotes and coinage are part of our everyday lives.

There was a great turnout at the September pizza meeting, which shows how vibrant and alive the ENS is. It was great to see you all there as well as a few new members. We have great things planned this year so keep showing up and you won't be disappointed. Also, don't forget about the show coming up on November 5 & 6. If you want to volunteer please talk to Marc Bink.

David

@ The Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 12, 2011



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

- Club Matters
- November Show
- Show - Silent Auction
- Grading Seminar - Marc Bink
- Silent auction (bring your surplus items to sell)
- Show and tell (bring your finds to share with fellow members)

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

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About Your Society

ENS meeting September 14, 2011 – Pizza Night – 49 members attending

David Peter opened the meeting at 7:25pm by welcoming members back after the summer break. He thanked Jeremy for hosting the ENS Annual BBQ this summer. There were new members in the crowd; they were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and discuss what they collect.

Ermin Chow, the ENS club delegate, gave a talk on the RCNA annual convention held in Windsor. He gave a slide show of the convention and bourse. He presented an award on behalf of the RCNA to Roger Grove for the RCNA's Best Local News Letter Award in 2010. Ermin had two displays at the RCNA convention and he won two awards for his efforts. Jules was presented with a RCNA Presidential Award for his contributions to the RCNA over the last year.

Ermin then gave a talk on his experiences at the ANA Summer Seminar in Colorado Springs. He was one of the lucky recipients to receive a fully paid scholarship to the seminar. He was required to submit a 12-page application detailing leadership, collecting interests, numismatic accomplishments, etc. There were a variety of topics for courses to attend, he chose the "Introduction to Grading Course", which was taught by some delegates from PCGS. While at the seminar, he was able to attend the Colorado Springs Coin Show which was about the same size as our shows.

Break

David Peter told members that *The Planchet* won 2nd place in

the ANA's Outstanding Club Publication Contest, this in addition to winning 1st place in the RCNA local club newsletter award.

Chris Hale gave a brief talk on his experience at the ANA show in Chicago. There were about 1,000 dealers at the show with approximately 1,800 tables. There were so many dealers that it was impossible to see all of them.

Show and Tell:

- David showed the new United States paper money book
- Marc passed around a counterfeit loonie
- Arif showed a coin which had "Battle of the Gods and Giants" on it
- Andy had a US coin with two heads – magician coin
- Roger showed a MS65 Mercury dime, a MS65 Buffalo nickel and a 1878 MS63 Morgan dollar.

David talked about the upcoming show in November. Howard is still accepting lots for the silent auction. Marc is looking for volunteers to set-up, tear-down and work during the show. Anyone wanting to volunteer for the appraisal table also needs to talk to Marc. He will be putting on an appraisal workshop for those interested. Pierre had show flyers, posters and handouts at the front table. We are also looking for volunteers to set up the large overpass banners.

Door prizes were drawn, silent auction was concluded and members retreated to Boston Pizza on 124 St.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

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Did They, or Didn't They?

By Marc Bink



Recently an article was published in the April 12-25, 2011 *Canadian Coin News* about some strange "twoonies" that were purported to have come from the Sherritt Mint. The only real difference was that the twoonie in question has beads around the rim whereas the regular circulating one does not. The date on the coin is 1996, and except for these strange and crude denticles the rest of the legends and the portrait and other devices look "normal". So there is some speculation as to the provenance of this coin, and one writer assumed that the Sherritt mint struck it. Needless to say my curiosity was piqued, and I decided to see what I could run down. In the process of doing my research, I was reminded of a particularly unpleasant incident which I had a very, very small role in - the loss of the Voyageur dies for the loonie. Here's that story as well as what I was able to find out about the funny twoonie that Mr. Regitko writes about.



In November of 1986 I had found myself working at the lowest position in the company. It wasn't supposed to be like this. I had originally started as an operator at Sherritt-Gordon Mines in August of 1986, but just before I had my obligatory 120 days in that which would have guaranteed my employment, I instead found myself facing a lay-off, an all too common fate for new hires in those days. Having just moved into a new apartment, I had a huge student loan hanging over my head when the lay-off occurred. So with a load of debt and a couple of old vintage cars to support, I had



to take pretty much any job that came my way to survive, and it just so happened that the mailroom had an opening. So, in order to survive, I signed a one-year contract to work in the mailroom, little knowing that my destiny would be somehow intertwined with the new dollar coin that was supposed to be introduced the following year.

In 1977 the Royal Canadian Mint (RCM) reported that paper dollars were starting to become expensive to manufacture and recommended that the government look into replacing them with a



Counterfeit Loonie, common type.

Obverse: *This side is fairly obvious. There's no way that a coin of this poor quality would have escaped the RCM's quality control.*

Reverse: *This coin was reputed to have been made in Calgary. From a distance it looks pretty convincing, however close up one can see that the Loon's beak is detached, and the "RRC" is swollen and larger than it should be. Did the counterfeiter get a set of worn dies?*

coin. The coin would have to be unique and easily recognizable by every member of the general public. To insure acceptance it would have to have a unique size (smaller) and shape as well as be visually identifiable. The RCM figured that the new coin should be a little larger than the current quarter and polygonal. To satisfy the vending machine companies it was determined that the coin would have to have at least seven sides (to maintain an even diameter across the coin), and any other multiple of sides would have to be odd numbered, due to the fact that an even number of sides produces two different diameters. The RCM produced a few test tokens made from nickel, settling on the eleven-sided coin. This looked good except for the colour which was felt should be different from any other circulating coin.

The US had been doing similar trials with the Susan B. Anthony coin and found that it would never gain public acceptance, partly because of colour issues. It looked the same as a quarter and was made from the same metal. The US had been using cupro-nickel sandwiches for their circulating coins since 1965. This new dollar coin was a little larger than a quarter, it was multi-sided, but it looked "cheap". Prior to the Susan B. Anthony issue, the US dollar was made from a much larger planchet, but this was felt to be too unwieldy. Research indicated that the public wanted something smaller that wouldn't rip out pockets or clutter change purses. Once it settled on the initial design and shape, the US mint felt that it had a winner, but it was mistaken. The last part of



the equation that was missed, and the Canadians learned from, was changing the colour of the coin to gold. The one thing neither mint had figured out yet was how to make a coin that was gold in colour which didn't tarnish to an unsightly black. What they didn't know and were eventually to find out is that there was a little nickel refinery in Alberta that had already figured it out and was actively shopping for customers.

Sherritt -Gordon Mines of Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta was already familiar with the electroplating process with its nickel-bonded steel (NBS) coins, so making a gold coloured coin shouldn't be much of a stretch. In 1979 Rex Pearce, the manager of the Metals Marketing Group at Sherritt, asked the research department to investigate making a bronze alloy that could be bonded to a nickel planchet. Initial results weren't very promising. The coins tarnished too quickly. After playing with it in house a little longer, it was realized that the demand for such a coin was becoming larger. Sherritt contracted M&T Chemicals out of New Jersey to come up with a better formula for the bronze. It came up with 90% copper and 10% tin, much better suited for a small layer on a coin. This alloy was called "aureate" which is based on the Latin word for gold "aureus", and the "ate" part signifies "like gold". More in house trials were needed to determine just how thick the aureate coating had to be to satisfy both the vending machine companies and provide a hardness factor against wear and scratching. After a while, the process was patented by Sherritt with Mike Ruscoe



Quality control sorting belts, Sheritt Mint, during a Loonie blank run. Operators would physically sort out obvious toned or blemished blanks. This job was mind-numbing...

and Willie Seibt being listed as co-inventors of the process.

By 1984 the RCM had two companies in contention for their impending dollar contract, Inco and Sheritt. Inco's coin involved plating a minute amount of gold to a pure nickel blank and then annealing it, producing a gold-nickel alloy. The government, in the meantime, was dragging its feet on the whole dollar bill replacement process. The Trudeau government preferred not to deal with the RCM's recommendations, but the Conservative government decided to finally act on the RCM's recommendations in 1986. By this time Sheritt's process was recommended to be the likely winner, as Inco's coin did not wear as well and was difficult and more expensive to make. The biggest problem with the Inco submission is that it required a stable gold price. Gold was starting to sky-rocket in value in the 80s, rendering Inco's process unaffordable pretty much overnight. The last thing the Canadian government wanted was a coin that had more intrinsic value than buying power which is what had happened in the 60s. So in 1987 Federal Minister McInnes announced that the dollar bill would be replaced by this new aureate coin starting on January 1, 1987, and that production was to begin immediately. Sheritt was awarded

the contract to produce the nickel blanks (refined from Inco ores) and plate them with aureate.

There was quite a bit of political controversy created when Sheritt's process won out over Inco's gold process. From what I've read, there were a lot of people in the Sudbury region that were crying foul over the awarding of the contract to a small western company. This extended all the way up to Ottawa, and the government was accused of "western favoritism" and sending valuable jobs out west. As a sort of peace offering it was decided that the source of the raw unrefined nickel would come from Inco in Sudbury and be refined at the Sheritt plant in the Fort. This placated the opposition somewhat. But from there on in, Sheritt was always operating under a cloud of suspicion, and it was hoped that it would do something that would cause it to lose this contract. Then it could be returned to its "rightful place" and everyone would be happy. We at Sheritt came close to losing it many times before the first coin was actually struck.

For Sheritt this created a host of problems. It had to re-tool its NBS plant to handle the aureate. There were still some small issues regarding chemistry, and there was a whole new security

angle required. The RCM insisted that Sherritt secure its site as best as possible and claimed that the current security arrangements were woefully inadequate. Securing a site as large as the Sherritt plant proved to be a daunting task. At the time there were approximately 1000 employees and numerous contractors coming and going to the plant on a daily basis. Sherritt did everything it could (short of violating personal liberties) to guard against theft. Part of the problem was the way coins and blanks were accounted for. Struck coinage was accounted for by the piece, meaning every minted coin was tracked. Blanks were accounted for by weight, but no actual mintage figure was ever given. The most secure area was the actual minting area due to the fact that Sherritt did strike some precious metal coinage for customers there. All of those pieces were rigorously accounted for. However, the area where blanks were made was next to impossible to fully secure. Sherritt at the time had numerous customers for blanks, and different customers' production runs ran concurrent to each other. There were also numerous tote-pans and pails of scrap around (the result of "tweaking" the chemistry before a run) that were always awaiting their turn at the atomizer. It was never considered essential to seal off the main production area. The premise here was that blanks were essentially useless as money until struck as currency. The loonie blanks that Sherritt made were always smaller in diameter, round and slightly thicker than the struck coin. Striking and collaring would bring the blank to its legal size and shape. This essentially made the blanks attractive only to counterfeiters and no one else since their use is limited. However, a few enterprising souls discovered that some vending machines and parking meters would accept raw blanks, so several went missing. In amongst 1000 employees there were bound to be a few kleptomaniacs that would find ways to steal from their employer. Both sides agreed that this risk was there but would have a marginal impact on the local economy, and that they could live with. Sherritt was able to accommodate the new requirements only after much hand-wringing and complaining from its security staff and the employees. RCM brockage¹ runs created the most problems. Whenever the rolling mill did, one it was essentially in lock-down. No one got in, no one got out, and anyone who felt he had to be there was physically searched by the RCMP. Sherritt started up its atomizer circuit in the late 1970's, and this was about the only economical way to re-melt nickel coinage in Canada at the time. So the RCM

contracted Sherritt to destroy struck nickel coinage and convert it back into strip, which would go back to Winnipeg for coining. About once a year, for 20 years, a series of semi-trailers with an armed escort would show up with loads of brockage from the RCM. These coins would be unloaded and carefully accounted for by RCM staff, and the destruction of these coins was accounted for down to the last piece. Everything was done under the supervision of armed guards or the RCMP. Every last piece that fell on to the floor would be picked up and fully accounted for to the penny. However, what I found out years later was no one thought to check the atomizer vacuum bags, and some struck mules and coins did find their way out long after the armed guards had left.

Blanks created different problems because they were handled differently. They were accounted for by weight, and no one ever knew how many were actually struck until they were coined. As stated above, blanks were generally useless as money except in certain parking meters and vending machines. So while the company took great pains to secure the huge sprawling site, some blanks still did manage to make it out. Company policy stated that anyone caught with any blanks was subject to instant dismissal and possible criminal charges. This policy was rigidly enforced. Production of the loonie blank continued on until 2000 when a last numismatic-grade run was made. There were a couple of memorable incidents that illustrate just how difficult it was to secure the plantsite. One involved an employee that had his car stolen from the parking lot. The vehicle was eventually recovered, but in the process of searching it the RCMP found a whole sack of loonie blanks under the seat. How these got out is not clear. The employee was eventually cleared, and any charges against him were dropped because no one could conclusively prove it was he that took them out. Another incident occurred when a large cache of counterfeit loonies was discovered to be in circulation. Apparently the counterfeiter had been making up rolls of these coins, placing two legitimate coins at either end of the roll and then taking them to banks. Due to the proximity of the counterfeits, it was automatically assumed to be the result of an "inside job" at Sherritt. Samples of the counterfeit coins were sent to Sherritt for chemical and metallurgical analysis. It was determined that they had been plated after they were struck, and that the counterfeiter had no relation whatsoever to Sherritt or the actual process. However, a City of Edmonton truck would still show up once a year at Sherritt's door with a sack full of blanks recovered from its parking meters right up until the rolling mill closed down. Security, while greatly improved, was never 100%

¹ Brockage: Any struck or minted coins that are rejected by a mint's quality control process for any number of reasons. These could be misstrikes due to bad dies, incorrect planchets, chipping, production problems, or in a few cases, mules, where the wrong obverse was used for a particular reverse.



Quality control sorting belts inside the minting area. Sherritt Mint. Here struck coinage would be inspected for blemishes or flaws. I'm not sure when this picture was taken, but that could be me on the right as this was one of my jobs early in my Sherritt career.

which would have been a minimum requirement for any outfit that would strike circulating currency. It was impossible to do. Most mints have these sorts of problems, and in the case of the German Bundesbank it's hit on an idea to re-coup some of its losses due to foreign coinage and blanks turning up at its door. The Bundesbank now sells these culls in bags to dealers and collectors at a premium.

Sherritt should have never struck any loonie coins. By Canadian law, striking circulating coins is the sole purview of the RCM, and no one else. The Currency Act of 1904 gave the Dominion Government the sole right to mint circulating currency in Canada. An act of parliament would be required to permit the coining of Canadian currency by anyone other than the RCM. But who knows how many "backroom" deals were done because the RCM's facilities were stretched to capacity with currency runs. I've heard of one case, and it is a strange one. According to one source I have in Sherritt management, there was a run of Loonies struck just before the initial release date. Apparently the Winnipeg mint was not able to accommodate the new Loonie production, so the RCM sent a set of Voyageur dies to Sherritt

where a preliminary run was made. These coins were later destroyed when the dies went missing. Apparently this was all done in total secrecy. My source tells me that they had some particularly hairy moments getting the lot shipped, to the point where the drums were actually left unguarded in a back lot because the truck didn't show up on time. They sat unmolested for an entire weekend, and by Monday when the seals were checked all coins were accounted for. This lot was eventually destroyed. This same source tells me that the primary run of the new Loonie coins was also made at Sherritt. So there's a good chance that most if not all of the 1987 strike could have been actually coined at Sherritt. However, I have no way of confirming this, no one wants to go on record. The RCM had contracted the US mint in Philadelphia to make some dimes in 1968-69 when the transition from silver coinage to nickel coinage was made. But the RCM did send out token dies to do special off-strikes in the form of test tokens, and the rumor was that it occasionally sent out working dies so that wear tests on NBS or aureate materials could be done. The ENS is currently in possession of some of the quarter sized tokens that were struck in NBS. Just who struck them isn't clear; the chances are they were struck at the RCM

in Winnipeg, but they are NBS tokens, and they are not marked "NBS Sherritt" like most of the other ones were at the time. So the origin of these tokens is still unknown, but they were made exclusively for wear testing and probably should have been destroyed once the tests were deemed complete.

Sherritt did have a unique relationship with the RCM. This dates back to 1961 when Rex Pearce sold the RCM on the benefits of "pure Sherritt nickel" as opposed to that of its previous suppliers. As was explained in a previous article, the beaver on the Canadian 5 cent piece got its whiskers back once the RCM switched to pure Sherritt nickel. There was a rumour going around that some of the initial 1962 Canadian nickel run was struck at Sherritt. This is not so. The Sherritt Mint didn't receive any minting equipment and didn't commence production until late 1966. Sherritt had been supplying the RCM with all of its strip and blanks since 1968. In 1966 Sherritt established its own minting facilities and was engaged in minting specialty tokens and coinage for foreign governments. So the facilities were there, and the possibility of Sherritt doing a limited run for a client was entirely possible. However, there were only two actual coining presses available, so there was never enough capacity to mint a large currency run. As yet, I haven't found anyone who will confirm on record that such things were actually done with regard to the RCM. The only confirmation I have comes from my sources in management, who prefer to remain anonymous.

Around the same time Sherritt was trying to satisfy the RCM that its security arrangements were satisfactory, a nasty little incident arose that also involved me personally. It threatened to derail the entire project. Sherritt had been involved with the RCM testing with the modified "Voyageur" reverse. At the time I was sending packages back and forth from the RCM in either Winnipeg or Ottawa. Then the news broke that the master dies of the new dollar coin had gone missing. They were supposedly in transit from Ottawa to Winnipeg. A private courier company had been entrusted with them. The problem was they never made it to Winnipeg where the new coins were to be minted. Somewhere in between the courier company claimed that it had "lost" them in a snowstorm. At first all fingers were pointed at Sherritt. The story broke in November of 1986. The dies were shipped on the 3rd and declared lost on the 12th when the RCM called in the RCMP. On the 17th the RCM announced that the introduction of the new coin would be delayed, and on the 21st they finally informed the minister responsible that the dies were lost.

This made things more than a little uncomfortable for me at the time. As previously stated, I was working in the mailroom at Sherritt at the time, totally oblivious to what was going on. We were never supposed to know the contents of things we shipped, and I only found out after this incident that some of those heavy packages I had to ship everywhere actually contained dies or coin samples. I had made it a point not to know what I was shipping and just followed instructions, making sure that the documentation was up to snuff on all sensitive shipments. This eventually saved me.

Everyone in the office knew I was a coin collector, especially Alan Lee, the Marketing Manager at the time. We had previously had some heated discussions about the new aureate process. Mr. Lee had an incredible amount of patience with people, he suffered fools gracefully, and on many an occasion with me he would patiently sit through my tirades, all the while knowing that I had no idea what I was talking about. He could have easily told me to get lost, but instead he chose to educate and support his product which he truly believed in. This too would eventually get me in to trouble like it had in the past.

After the RCMP turned up in the morning, all eyes immediately focused on me. It was assumed that

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Counterfeiting and Other Crimes in Numismatics

By Mike Marshall

Since the inception of currency attempts have been made to mimic said currency, hence the beginning of counterfeiting. However there are other crimes (both law breaking and morally wrong) that have taken place and continue today. I will not go into the EBay fraud of buying a coin from China, then listing it a month later with a comment similar to, "This coin has been in my family foryears" etc. I wish to point to "other" numismatic crimes.



First I wish to address the switching of coins in ICCS holders. This has happened in the past and continues today. The most famous case was of a well known dealer (who is still a large dealer as well as a large auction house) who was caught having switched coins. A "dealer association" investigated, restitution was made, but no formal charges were ever laid. The sad part of these facts are twofold, 1) It is rarely openly discussed in numismatic circles. This sweep it under the rug attitude educates no one. How can people protect themselves from fraud like this if it is not broadcast openly? It serves no useful purpose to withhold the facts except to create the believer vs. non-believer factions which have emerged recently on web chat groups. To add fuel to this fire ICCS was offered "a large percentage" of the tooling costs at the end of the "investigation" by the "dealer assn." to prevent similar happenings by creating a tamper proof holder. ICCS declined the offer. In my opinion, why would ICCS switch

holders when it is not held accountable for the "opinion" on the soft holder. To this day, the comment that, "This must be a tampered holder" is used by many, ICCS included. Again, an attitude like this does nothing but undermine confidence in Canadian numismatics. This was blatant FRAUD! All collectors should be reminded/informed of this for no other reason than to protect themselves. Please remember that it is in the best interest of some to keep this quiet.

The next example deals with the ICCS soft holder. It, however, is a moral issue and not one of actual law breaking. Approximately 18 months ago on a web chat group a statement was made by an individual who happens to be from Alberta. I was taken aback by the "matter of fact" implications of the comment. Here is the comment as I recall it. "There is a member of my coin club who will carefully remove a coin from an ICCS holder, thus allowing you to re-submit it, in an attempt

at a higher grade. If it comes back higher, or the same, good for you or no problem. However, if it comes back lower or with detracting comments like "cleaned" or "scratched", then the individual will replace it and seal it back in the original holder. Well now, this one could get ugly. It directly correlates with the statement above about secure holders. The nonchalance with which this was discussed is very disturbing. A) There is the matter of the ease of removal and re-insertion. B) Will it only be done by this individual for this purpose, or will it escalate into the switching of coins? C) Does greed motivate these people to the point that the ramifications of their actions by throwing population reports off etc. become secondary? D) Is it "because I can", and it is mine to do with as I please? Like I said, it is a moral issue, which has arguments on both sides. Please ponder these facts and protect yourself when buying coins.

Here is a counterfeit Canadian coin you may not have seen before. My research shows it to have been produced in Lebanon circa late 1960's/early 70's. Please keep in mind that this coin's rim is NOT typical of other examples I have seen. They were perfect. This one, however, is not.

The size and weight of this counterfeit fall into the tolerance of the RCM. Having had this example's composition checked by XRF, I was very surprised to be informed that it was 94% silver. After some thought, I realized there was a very good reason for this. Counterfeiting is not illegal in Lebanon, however fraud is (with a severe punishment). To circumvent the fraud, more silver was used in the planchets, making the raw product more valuable than the original. There are numerous small differences/mistakes in the effigy (like the humped nose, lip angle etc.), but I have chosen one obvious (if you look) legend error. The "X" in REX is irregular. Both diagonals of the "X" (see obverse image) will be the same thickness on a real coin. On the counterfeit the right diagonal is twice as thick. The reverse also has many small issues, but is very well done unlike the fakes from China. In the provided images the counterfeit coin is on the left.

In closing, stay vigilant and educate yourself. Counterfeits, as well as actions of others, will therefore have limited effect on your enjoyment of numismatics.

Mike Marshall





The Glory of the Army

By Terence Cheesman

Sometime in 330 A.D. the Emperor Constantine began a new issue of base metal coinage. This coinage featured the images of Constantine or one of his two sons, Constantine Junior and Constantius, on the obverse and the image of two helmeted soldiers standing on either side of two military standards on the reverse. The reverse legend reads GLORIA EXERCITVS, or loosely translated, "The Glory of the Army". What is unusual about this coinage is the high degree of uniformity which extended to all mints. While uniform designs had been a feature of the Roman coinage for over 30 years before these coins were struck, there had always been some degree of independent imagery favoured by some mints. With this issue all the mints seemed to be operating from the same playbook. The reasons for this are unclear. Constantine's rise to power was marked by a series of civil wars. Many of the designs of the coinage reflect the dynamic of war or the anticipation of such as well as the creation and disposal of alliances. In addition Constantine was a champion of Christianity, and it was during this period that Christianity became an official religion of the Roman Empire with Constantinople's becoming a new Christian capital of the Empire. The new power of Christianity is reflected on the coins, especially those from the new mint of Constantinople.

The legend GLORIA EXERCITVS was relatively new to the pantheon of Roman propaganda. Previously the legend had been used on one of the special issues minted to celebrate the founding of the new city of Constantinople. In that case the reverse featured a soldier bareheaded facing right with a spear and shield. Thus the new design could be seen as an expansion of the previous design. It could also signify the unity of the Empire. For the last 30 years armies from different regions had battled each other to further the interests of their commanders. Constantine, who unified the Empire, put an end to these wars and consolidated the army. Thus the two soldiers facing each other in harmony represented the great western and

eastern armies who could now spend their time and energy in defence of the Empire. Another factor influencing the coinage is Christianity. Constantine no longer could draw upon the old pagan lexicon to describe his relationship with the army. Previous pagan emperors could use the personification of FIDES MILITVM representing essentially the loyalty of the army which was usually depicted as a female deity holding one or more military standards. While Fides was not a major goddess, she certainly was pagan and therefore was not acceptable in the new Roman coinage. Thus this extremely standardized coinage could advertise not only the unity of the Empire and Constantine's absolute control of it but Constantine's religious sensibilities as well.



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The obverse imagery was far more controlled than before. The previous decade had seen radical experimentation with the image of the Emperor. Earlier the Emperor had usually been depicted laureate, a fashion first popularized by Augustus and used for over 300 years with very few exceptions. The major one was the use of the radiate crown which became the symbol of a double denomination such as the dupondius or the double denarius, usually referred to as the antoninianus. Bare headed images are known for emperors, but certainly by the second century A.D. this image was largely restricted to the heir presumptive or Caesar. However by the end of the third century A.D. most of the images created for the Caesars were in fact laureate. Thus except for the titles the images of the Emperors and the Caesars were often very similar. Constantine appears to have disliked this arrangement and began to experiment with his image. Early examples included a plain diadem which had a border of laurel leaves. Later the laurels gave way to an extremely elaborate diadem which was decorated with rosettes and pearls. The rosettes were most likely large precious stones surrounded by smaller stones or pearls in elaborate metal work. Others were made up of two or three rows of pearls sometimes augmented with a large stone surrounded by pearls at the forehead. The introduction of the GLORIA EXERCITVS coinage cemented this image. The image of Constantine with only one or two exceptions features him with a rosette diadem. His image is usually larger than that of his sons. His sons generally are laureate, their images are smaller and occasionally they face to the left. Only the mint of Cyzicus seems to buck this trend. On one issue Constantine is still laureate, and on others some of his sons appear with a simple pearl diadem.

This coinage which started in 330 A.D. lasted for over 5 years. In 336 A.D., because the weight and diameter of the coinage was reduced the two standards in the middle of the design was cut back to one. This modified design continued until 342 A.D. when the design was replaced. Constans became Caesar on 25 December 333 A.D., and Delmatius became Caesar on 18 September 335 A.D., adding two new names to the original three. On 22 May 337 Constantine died, and his three sons, Constantine Junior, Constantius and Constans all became Emperors. Delmatius was executed as a



part of the power struggle that followed the death of Constantine. These coins are very common, are very easy to acquire and the thought that the issue is rather boring might be forgiven. However within this group of coins are some rather interesting types, four of which I recently found.

The first coin is a coin of Constantius minted circa 334 A.D. at the mint of Arles France. The obverse reads FL. IVL. CONSTANTIVS NOB. C. In full this would read FLAVIVS IVLIVS CONSTANTIVS NOBILISSIMVS CAESAR. Loosely translated this would be "Flavius Julius Constantius the Most Noble Heir". The reverse is standard, with the mint mark reading SCONST. Arles at this point in time was named Constantina in honour of Constantine. The S represents the second officina or workshop in the mint. What makes this coin interesting is the presence of a Chi Rho (XP) which is an early Christian symbol. The first Christian symbol on an aes coin occurred on a special issue minted at Constantinople about 7 years before. The Chi Rho on that coin was a part of the design. Arles is known for a series of subsidiary symbols on the reverse of its coins. These include a branch, crescent, circle and tree. The Chi Rho on this coin is unusual as it is likely to be an affirmation of faith by the particular mint official in charge of minting the coinage. Issues minted for Constantine, Constantine Junior, and Constans are known. They are all rare. So far only two others of these coins minted for Constantius are known, one with a PCONST mint mark, signifying that it was minted at the first workshop of the mint, and a second where the mint mark is unclear as to which workshop was responsible. Thus this coin is the first with a clear second officina. Chi Rhos became more common and were used on the modified design after 336 in Arles and continued after the death of Constantine at the mint of Lyons France, Aquileia in northern Italy and Siscia in Serbia.

The next coin is actually a related group of three coins, two from the mint of Siscia which is now in Serbia and Nicomedia which is in northern Turkey. As noted above Constans became a Caesar at the end of 333 A.D., joining his two brothers and sharing the title of heir. However on a few issues the obverse legend used by Constans is a bit unusual. Normally Roman legends are in the nominative case. As noted above Constantius has the title "the Most Noble Heir" However for

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Encounters with Ancient Coin Displays in Europe

By Wayne Hansen



Over the past three decades, my intrepid wife and I have visited many areas of the world, looking for the new, the old, the different, the interesting, the famous, and the beautiful. We have enjoyed exploring a large variety of historical places, including a considerable number of ancient Greek, Roman, and Egyptian sites in and around the Mediterranean. It is remarkable how one can poke around a remote temple ruin in Turkey or Sicily, for example, and have the place all to yourself.

Although it is fascinating to see the actual ruins of places where ancient cultures developed, the other part of the historical equation is to see the trove of artifacts that have been recovered from those places. For this, you usually have to find a museum, either in the national locality of each site, or elsewhere if the recovered objects have been liberated at some point (consider the Elgin Marbles). So we make time to visit all kinds of archeological, cultural, and fine art museums, whether to see the Tut treasures in Cairo, Egypt, or the ironclad gunboat USS Cairo in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

These pastimes took a slightly different bent on our first trip to Turkey in 1996, when I bought a counterfeit ancient coin from a local farmer (like everyone else). I didn't know at the time whether it was even Greek or Roman – it turned out to be posing as a Roman Provincial. I found this out soon afterward because I bumped into longtime collector and ENS member, T Cheesman, who was doing a lovely display of Greek coins for the Mediterranean Institute. I discovered that real ancient coins were readily available, though not as readily as they are today, since the internet age was just dawning at that time. I gradually started my own collection and eventually specialized in Greek coins for their variety, history, and beauty. This seems like a digression, but my point is that museums sometimes have displays of coins, either incorporated within a general archeological theme, or even dedicated within a separate numismatic facility. Anyone with an interest in the pure history of coin making, or who perhaps dabbles in the dark arts of coin collecting, can search for such museums on their travels. There is sometimes no substitute for seeing the real thing, to get a true sense of the fabric of particular coins, or just to bask in the magnificence of a rare and beautiful specimen. Greek coins often display a three-

dimensional, sculptural quality, and when you can see large, artistic, and frequently unobtainable examples in a museum, the effect can be almost breathtaking.

On our subsequent travels, I (sometimes my wife and I) made an attempt to see ancient numismatic displays where available. This can be difficult since coins are much less revered than fine art, and coin displays are relatively uncommon. Classical European culture and the ancient coin hobby are appreciated worldwide, but understandably most large museum study collections of European archeological artifacts (including coins) are only usually found in Europe or the United States. As well, such collections are almost entirely kept in storage, with a token number of specimens on display, so it is usually necessary to have an academic introduction to see a lot of the material.

The two largest ancient coin collections in the US are in New York at the American Numismatic Society and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC (I seem to recall a walk-in vault). Canada has a display of monetary history at the Bank of Canada in Ottawa (where I noticed a Syracusan decadrachm), and although the Royal Ontario Museum has a coin collection, I haven't seen it. Otherwise, I have not run into any ancient European coin displays anywhere outside Europe – except I did see a limited number of Greek "Silk Road" coins (largely Alexander, Seleukid, and Baktrian Kingdom issues from Asia Minor and the East) among other Asian ancients, on one of our visits to the superb Shanghai Provincial Museum in China.

The focus in this article however is to briefly describe ancient coin displays I have encountered on European visits. This is not an academic itemization, rather it is a personal overview (others



Athens, Greece – Numismatic Museum. Coin 3 - Head of deified Alexander III (Tetradrachm of Ptolemy I, Egypt) 4th Cent BC Athens. Coin 40 - Lion Scalp (Tetradrachm of Rhegion, Italy) 5-4th Cent BC.

can perhaps provide details of places they have found). I have seen wonderful assortments of ancient coins in various Mediterranean locations over the past 10-15 years, but I also had the opportunity this past June to visit some northern European ancient collections that are recognized worldwide for their scope of material (portions of several of these collections are published in reference catalogues such as SNGs or posted in online museum databases).

Many of the European coin displays I have seen are in capital cities, such as London, Athens, Copenhagen, Berlin, Rome and Paris. These displays are offshoots of national museum collections that have been assembled from all classical Mediterranean regions. I have been to other capital cities, such as Stockholm and Lisbon, known to have great collections, but I narrowly missed seeing these collections (sadly, we were in Lisbon the one day of the week the Gulbenkian Museum was closed, missing one of the most renowned collections of highly artistic Greek coins and other art items ever assembled by an individual). I have found other museums with coins in regional cities, such as Naples and Syracuse in Italy, Rhodes and Iraklion in Greece, as well as a provincial museum in Cadiz, Spain. I've also found them near ruined ancient sites, such as Paestum, Sibari, and Imera in Italy, and Olympia and Delphi in Greece. Sibari and Imera are memorable for their shiny, new museums in remote locations and the fact that my Sybaris nomos was in better

condition than the ones they displayed in the Sibari museum. On one visit to the Peloponnesian town of Nafplion in Greece, the Alpha Bank had sponsored a small but dramatic display of Greek coins from their corporate collection. They had arranged the coins in glass fronted display cases in rooms on the main floor of a commercial building, with each individual coin also highlighted in backlit enlargements on the walls above.

Surprisingly, I have found that several famous European art and archeology museums, such as the Louvre in Paris and the Hermitage in St Petersburg, pay little or no attention to coins. Moreover, I have also not personally encountered a public numismatic display on our travels in Turkey or Egypt, even though Turkey especially has a long history of ancient coin production (the first true coins were struck there, and minting continued in a multitude of sites through at least Roman times).

Following is a brief description of the more significant museum coin displays I have encountered, both in previous travels and on our trip in June/July. I have appended a rough, subjective assessment of quantity (QN) and quality (QL) of each of these displays (quality includes both quality of the coins and the overall presentation). The ratings are numbered from 1 to 5, with 5 the highest -- the highest rating is therefore shown as: (QN 5/QL 5). My rating is very subjective and primarily pertains to the Greek coin displays. Most museums seem to emphasize

the ancient Greek rather than the Roman or Byzantine anyway.

A few coin photos I took on location in the museums are also provided. Most museums now allow photos of coins, but lighting and viewing conditions are almost always poor so the results are not ideal.

Coin Museums from Previous Trips:

(Last visited within the past 3 years while traveling on our own, except Syracuse which was 10 years ago.)

Athens, Greece – Numismatic Museum. (QN 5/QL 5). The national coin collection is housed on two floors of an intricately-decorated mansion in the centre of the city near the parliament building, formerly owned by Heinrich Schliemann, the wealthy German discoverer of Troy. (The Greek archeology collection is located in the much larger National Museum, including the famous bronze statue of Poseidon with outstretched arms and the bronze horse and jockey, both life-size). The entire first floor of the Numismatic Museum was jammed with cases of high-grade Greek coins from all former Greek territories and Mediterranean colonies, plus the Hellenistic Kingdoms. I especially recall the magnificence of a perfect, high relief, attic weight, Alexander

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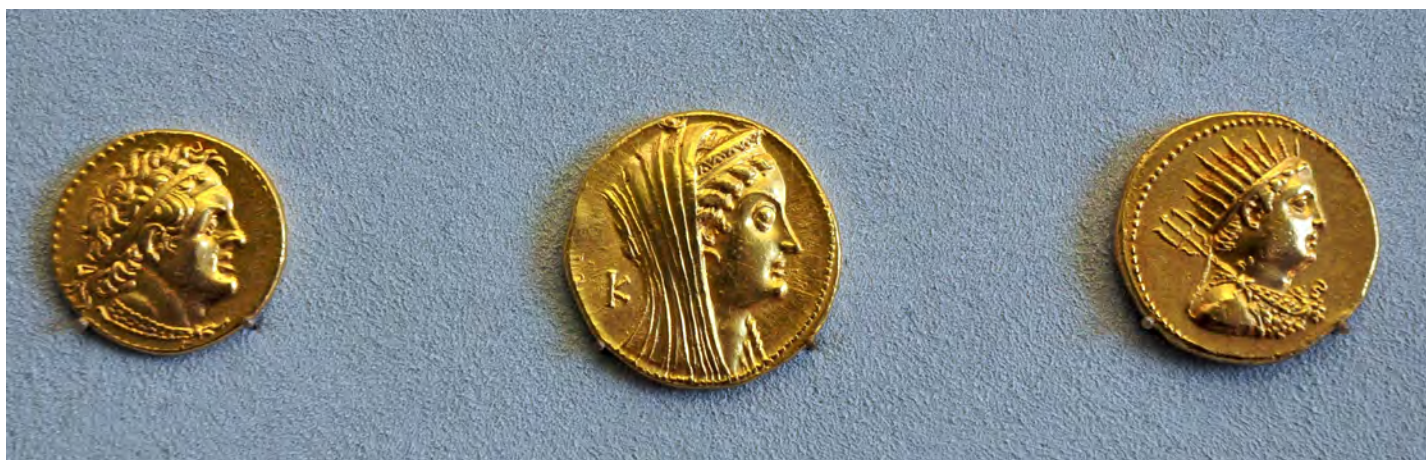


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Berlin Altes - Coin 67 (top) - Head of Apollo and Swan (Tetradrachm of Klazomenai, Asia Minor) 4th Cent BC. Coin 15 - Eagle of Zeus and Crab (Tetradrachm of Akragas, Sicily) 5th Cent BC. Coin 67 (bottom) - Grain Ear with Grasshopper and Dolphin Outline next to Incuse (Nomos of Metapontion, Italy) 6th Cent BC.

elephant-head tetradrachm of Ptolemy I from Memphis, Egypt (among the first minted of this unique type) and an equally great lion head tetradrachm from Rhegion, Italy. There was also a whole hoard of mint state Philip II gold staters found in Corinth. It was all reasonably well presented, though lighting levels were low. The upper floor contained a less-impressive Roman collection.



Berlin Bode - Egyptian Gold Coins (Octadrachms of Ptolemaic Kingdom) 3rd Cent BC

Rome, Italy – National Museum (Palazzo Massimo). (QN 2/QL 3). I only discovered this museum on a more recent visit, since there are so many other priorities in such an historical city (I had not previously seen any coins in Rome including at the Vatican Museums). This branch of the National Museum is near the central train station, and it displays the captivating and famous life-size Greek bronze sculpture of the seated Boxer -- in fact it sits right on the floor beside you. The main coins I recall seeing there included an amazingly comprehensive display of cast Roman Republican, but other Roman coins were also presented. Greek coins were unexpectedly scarce.

Paris, France – Bibliotheque Nationale. (QN 2/QL 3). This massive numismatic collection, including 110,000 Greek coins, is tucked away in part of the old Bibliotheque facility – called the Richelieu Library – located a few blocks north of

the Louvre (all the book collections were moved to a new building in the outskirts leaving the big, circular, multi-storey former reading room empty). I found a few display cases in the reception area of the Coin Department that showed the usual general assortment of Greek and Roman coins, but the facility is more oriented to those doing research, and appointments are required for any serious investigation.

Syracuse, Sicily – Numismatic Museum. (QN 5/QL 4). This is a rather unique facility. It is located on the old square in the centre of the ancient island of Ortygia (now called Citta Vecchia), which was the heart of ancient Syracuse. Across the square from the museum is an original Greek temple that was converted to a church (the old columns are still visible in the walls). Nearby, on the edge of the Mediterranean, is the well of Arethusa. The museum was inside an



**Copenhagen - Coin 37 - Octopus (Tetradrachm of Eretria, Greece) 5th Cent BC.
Coin 31 - Head of Tanit (Decadrachm of Carthage) 3rd Cent BC.**



Berlin Bode - Top - Apollo Striding with Trident (Nomos of Poseidonia, Italy) 6th Cent BC. Middle - Head of Deified Alexander III (Abukir Medallion found in Egypt) 3rd Cent AD. Bottom - Nike atop Ship Prow (Gold Stater of Demetrios Poliorketes, Salamis, Greece) 3rd Cent BC

undistinguished government building, but the coins were secured in a massive vault, consisting of a series of rooms. My son and I were the only ones visiting at the time, and a guard followed us as we went from room to room. Each room contained display cabinets along the walls, full of all imaginable Greek coins, especially those from this artistic centre of Greek coin production in the Classical period (that is, the Greek colonies in southern Italy and Sicily). Most coins were well preserved, although in very bright condition, and many were shown in considerable quantity (I counted 30 to 40 Syracusan decadrachms in one case). No photos were allowed.

Naples, Italy - Archeological Museum. (QN 3/QL 3). This large museum is located on the east side of this ancient Greek city site (known at the time as Neapolis), now the centre of Naples. Leaving from the train station or the harbor, to get there you have to walk through the narrow streets of the old town, which still follow the original Greek city plan. Many archeological treasures are found in the museum, including most items moved from Pompeii, monumental ancient Greek marble sculptures (such as the Farnese Bull and Farnese Hercules), plus the famous mural of Alexander confronting Darius. The museum displayed a lot of wonderful coins from southern Italy, Sicily, and Carthage, but they were often of very good quality rather than very top quality (but then very good quality in rare Greek coins is still exceptional). They had a Syracuse decadrachm, Carthage decadrachm, and a Naxos tetradrachm (with the inspired seated Silenos reverse die design), as well as other important coins.

Coin Museums from Recent Trip:

(Visited in June/July 2011 during a driving tour of Britain, a stop in Copenhagen, and then a cruise around the Baltic Sea.)

London, England – British Museum. (QN 2/QL 4). With some time in London before starting the driving part of our trip, I first revisited a couple of large dealer offices (a few nice coins, but £17,000 for a Thourioi distater?) and a few museums. The British Museum has changed over the last few years, and I found an extensive section of Greek and Asia Minor archeology in a new section of the building on the first floor. There were processional sculptures from Miletus and tomb reliefs from Lycia and Cyprus, as well as artifacts from other Greek regions. In the same section there was a wonderful display of archaic Greek coins (a favorite of mine). The specimens included many early electrum types and city state coins with their unique motifs. I got a bit carried away snapping photo after photo, so that a French couple came over to see what the fuss was about. I heard the woman say, "Je ne comprends pas!" as they walked away – one's interests obviously don't necessarily translate to those of others.

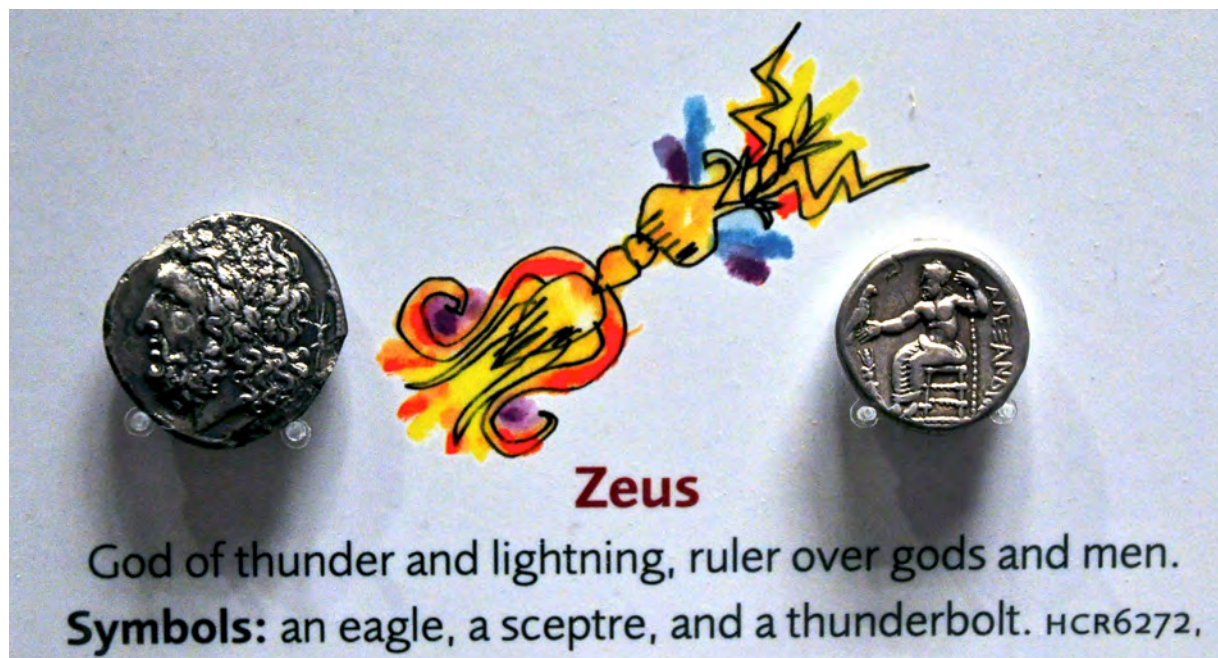
Beside the great archaic display was a glass shelf holding a recreated Artemis Hoard – with the actual jar that had been found plus electrotypes of the electrum coins that were inside the jar. The hoard was found under the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus and contained many of the earliest struck coins (therefore it is the earliest hoard). After then checking some of the Persian and Egyptian artifacts, and the Elgin Marbles, I went to the general numismatic history display upstairs. The exhibit had been redesigned to be more visually exciting, and it was interesting enough but not spectacular in the specific Greek component. The BM has one of the largest research collections of ancient coins, so again any in-depth viewing of its material needs introductions and appointments.

Oxford, England – Ashmolean Museum. (QN 4/QL 5). Our stop in the relatively small city of Oxford was brief and on a perfect, sunny spring day (not the time to go to a museum). There was a temporary exhibit at the Ashmolean on the “Treasures of the Royal Capital of Macedon” which we missed in favor of looking at the numismatic collection and a few other archeological exhibits. Only one large wall case contained most of the ancient Greek coins, but the quality of the coins was superb. In the group was a rare facing Apollo tetradrachm of Katana, another rare tetradrachm of Naxos with facing Silenos, an extremely rare tetradrachm of Akragas with double eagles grasping at a hare (all three from ancient Sicily), and a wonderful tetradrachm of Ephesos (with bee obverse) in perfect condition. Another display explained something about royal portraiture in Alexander’s time. In the centre of the room there was also an interesting circular display with several panels showing cartoonish illustrations of Greek gods and heroes, together with one or two coin examples of each god’s image. (I had done a similar display at the last spring show for ENS, without the cartoons, so it was good to see another approach). The overall display quality, interpretation, and lighting at this museum were excellent.

Copenhagen, Denmark – National Museum. (QN 4/QL 3-4). I hadn’t been back to Copenhagen since a friend and I were backpacking around Europe in 1969! I visited this museum on each day of our three days in the city. The first time I went, the coin cabinet was closed but they had a staff person open it for me, and they waited until I was done (they had staffing and fire exiting problems). Next day, I met with one of the directors who explained a few things about the collection (as with others, it began as a royal collection, and all of their Greek and Roman Provincial coins have been published in their SNGs plus Supplement). The display area was closed again, but he took me to the adjacent numismatic library to check some volumes. On the third day, they ensured the cabinet was open, but I looked more at the archeological stuff (bog sacrifices). The museum is near the main square and the



Oxford Ashmolean - Top - Head of Persephone surrounded by Dolphins (Decadrachm of Syracuse, Sicily) 5th C. BC
Middle - Seated Silenos (Tetradrachm of Naxos, Sicily) 5th C. BC
Bottom - Apollo Striding with Daimon on Arm (Nomos of Kaulonia, Italy) 6th C. BC



Oxford Ashmolean - Zeus and Seated Zeus Coins in Display of "Gods and Heroes"

Tivoli and also close to the wonderful and eclectic Carlsberg Glyptotek Museum (containing ancient to modern fine art, including Etruscan lidded tombs I had never seen before and three rare busts of Alexander the Great). The ancient coin galleries are located in the old, creaky section of the National Museum, in a distant suite of rooms including the restricted library and offices. There were 6-8 horizontal display cases for the Greek coins strung along either side of a narrow room. At first glance, there was a tremendous variety of important Greek coins – again, many of them rare, and many displayed both obverse and reverse, which was a treat. Particularly stunning was a pair of extraordinary decadrachms of Carthage, and both obverse and reverse were high grade. There were also decadrachms from Syracuse, Thaco-Macedon, a nice stater of Eretria (with octopus reverse), many tetradrachms, including great ones from Akragas, Rhegion, Mende and Knossos, plus the medallion-like Alexander decadrachm depicting an epic elephant battle with King Porus during his Indian campaign. The quality of the coins was, however, uneven, probably since in a lot of cases the coins were collected more for type than condition. As well, the display cabinets were old, and in my view the layout of the coins was not too systematic. The Roman section was not very comprehensive. Overall, it was still worth a visit, and there is much more to do in Copenhagen.

Berlin, Germany – Bode Museum. (QN 5/ QL 5). The main reason we wanted to go to Berlin was to see the Pergamon Museum, which houses the Altar of Zeus from ancient Pergamon (we had seen the base of the Altar on a steep-sided acropolis in Bergama Turkey), as well as the Miletus Gate and the Ishtar Gate. So the

first thing we did was go to Museum Island in the former East Berlin (a World Heritage Site). The Island accommodates four antiquities museums originally constructed between 1830 and 1930 that were recently renovated to cover damage from WW II and neglect by the DDR. We visited all four, first going to the Neues Museum (great Egyptian material with one room devoted to the absolutely stunning Head of Nefertiti), and then to the previously mentioned Pergamon Museum. There were no coins at either of those museums, but then we went to the third one, the Bode. It is in a very awkward building with a long stretch of stairs to the second floor where there is a major ancient coin display. Most of the exhibits at this museum seemed to consist of Renaissance nick-nacks, but two or three spacious alcoves were devoted to ancient Greek coins. Again, there was an extensive variety of very nice and very well organized archaic, classical and Hellenistic coins – most of the usual suspects, plus an unusual Gortyna stater from Crete, a series of Egyptian gold octadrachms, a Demetrios Poliorketes gold stater, and an exceedingly rare Pergamon gold stater. I took a lot of photos in the first alcove thinking that was it, then I found another alcove and then another. Most coins had dark patinas and were in excellent condition, but usually not absolute mint state quality. I thought at that point that this was about the ultimate coin exhibit. There was also part of a gold exhibit in another alcove. One wall case contained five spectacular, large Abukir gold medallions with obverse images of: Alexander facing with spear and shield, Alexander with Ammon horn, Alexander in Attic helmet, bust of Olympias, and Caracalla with shield (all have intricate reverses). They were supposedly found in Egypt but made in Beroia,



*London - Archaic Coins
(Staters of Aegean Islands,
Greece) 6-5th Cent BC*

Macedon in the 3rd century AD. Then on the floor in the middle of the same alcove was one of the ten 2007 Canadian Mint Million Dollar face value gold coins! There was no one around – I could have made off with it, except that it weighed 100 kilos (99.999 gold), was 53 cm wide (21 inches), and it was in a slab. Apparently these promotional coins were worth about \$1.8M in 2007. At today's gold prices they could probably sell it and pay off Portugal's sovereign debt

Berlin, Germany – Altes Museum. (QN 5/QL 5). After the Bode, and with a lot of other sights to see on a very hot day, I thought we should just push on, but my wife thought we ought to go to the last of the four museums, the Altes. So we hurried over and found that it was a great museum, with what turned out to be the best ancient Greek display. It was somewhat overpowering to see the extreme quality of the coins and then have only a little time to appreciate and photograph them. (After I took some photos, we left the other parts of the museum and rushed out in the heat to walk to the Brandenburg Gate, Reichstag, Holocaust Memorial and Hitler Bunker site). The Altes coins were exceptionally well preserved, had a light, even toning, and were of uniformly high artistic style. There was a large group of archaic types plus coins from the entire ancient Greek world – Greece, Macedon, Sicily, Italy, and Asia Minor. Many of the very rare ones even included a second coin to show the reverse (almost all second coins were genuine, except for the extremely rare Delphi tetradrachm and Athens decadrachm where one side was a cast). There was a mint state, facing Silenos gold stater of Pantikapaeon, pristine tetradrachms of Akanthos, Amphipolis, Boetia, Eretria, Olympia, Tenedos, Rhodes, Klazomenai, Kamarina, Naxos, Smyrna,

and Ainos (among others), a Ptolemy octadrachm, and many decadrachms - from Carthage, Babylon, and Syracuse. The coins were beautiful and the quality of presentation was excellent. Berlin Museum maintains an excellent public numismatic website which shows all its best coins in great detail.

As an itinerant collector visiting some of these major ancient displays, it can be frustrating as well as exciting to see so many impossibly pristine examples of the coins that I find so fascinating. You have to rationalize that some coins are just too rare or too expensive to acquire for a personal collection. However, the fact that they exist at all after two millennia, and that they can be seen as well as studied, is a small miracle in itself. The artistry of the truly great Greek coins is only matched by the technical mastery of the carvers that created the dies and by the aesthetics of the society that nurtured the endeavor. It is essential and appropriate that examples of the great coins should be publicly accessible and displayed, so that everyone can marvel at them while appreciating the achievements of ancient cultures.

I hope these comments encourage others to take advantage of opportunities to browse numismatic displays in museums, at dealer's shops, or at coin shows, whether the opportunities are near or far. Coin displays can provide historical context for a collection, dazzle you with the scope of content and artistry of the objects, and perhaps even stimulate new interests in the viewer. (All photos by the author)



Continued from page 11 - A Penny's Worth

the theft of these dies could only be an "inside job". I got called over to Alan Lee's office and grilled for about an hour, being threatened with all sorts of things unless I started talking. It started with, "Do you remember a package that was sent to the RCM in Ottawa?" and, "Did you tell anyone what was in that package?" What was I supposed to "talk" about when I had no idea what they were talking about to begin with? Having been blindsided like this, and having my livelihood threatened yet again, all I could do was plead utter and total ignorance and even incompetence. I told them they were welcome to search my apartment and the rest of my life. Eventually they decided to leave me alone, but for a while I was watched. It couldn't have been an easier job for whoever was watching me. At the time I drove a green 1949 Chevrolet that didn't even have enough power to get out of its own way, let alone lose a chase vehicle. I should have known there was going to be trouble when I saw an RCMP cruiser at the front gate that morning. Naively I assumed that they liked my car, which is why they stared at me when I went in. As it was, I was vindicated in the end. The package I sent had eventually made it to Ottawa intact, so I did my job and had the paper and the tracking to prove it. But for a while there it was pretty nip-and-tuck as to whether I had a job or was going to get a forcible relocation to a new position making license plates.

The problem was that no one ever really explained what had happened and let me off the hook. For years I wondered, if I had wondered, whether I was in some small way responsible but was too scared to bring the subject up. It turns out that I had nothing to worry about, all of the packages I sent did actually make it to their destinations. It may have been that someone wanted to have a good laugh at my discomfort, so they just let the whole thing slide and watched me squirm.

The RCM rushed the "loonie" dies into production. Acts of Parliament were pushed through, but the release of the new coins was delayed by 6 months. However in the end it all went well. Eventually I wound up back in the leach plant a year later. I helped shovel and refine a lot of loonies' worth of nickel between the years of 1987 to 2000. Besides the regular loonie planchets, Sherritt also provided "numismatic" grades of aureate to the RCM. These coins had an extra layer of copper plated to them, more or less doubling the plating thickness and were handled by hand. These coins will not work in most vending machines. The next time you get a proof loonie that has been circulated, try to see if it'll work in a vending machine. The chances are it won't. Besides the actual plating phase being different, these blanks were eventually dried by hand and individually packaged. What still will work

in some vending machines are loonie blanks. These blanks, although round and slightly thicker than a circulation strike, do still contain the right recipe and electromagnetic signature to work in most modern vending machines, which is why blanks were still being stolen up until the rolling mill finally closed

The guys who worked for Sherritt at the rolling mill were justifiably proud of their product. I remember a time when I was in Mr. Lee's office, discussing the merits of the coin. My claim as a coin collector was that the coin would be unattractive and easily tarnished in a matter of weeks, and that the public wouldn't accept anything that looked as ugly as a worn out penny. He smiled and pulled out a couple of blanks that he was carrying around as sort of a wear test. He said, "Here are a couple of samples. This one is one of ours. See how it dulls a bit but still retains its gold colour? This one is from one of our competitors. See how it turns black? It also leaves a black film on one's hands. Notice how ours doesn't. It will look like this for as long as it's in circulation." Taking a sample in my hands to test it, I noticed that our blank had a good feel to it and seemed to be impervious to my attempts to scratch it. "How about the plating wearing off over time", I asked. He replied, "It would probably take a hundred years of hard use before the plating wears through." The bottom line was that Mr. Lee was right. The coins are wearing just like he predicted, and they still retain their gold colour in circulation. Sherritt's research and development in the field of electroplating was also instrumental in its being granted a sizeable chunk of the Euro program, manufacturing blanks for mints in France, Spain, and the Netherlands.

The rolling mill always had a problem though; it was very difficult to sell coins to governments. As such, it concentrated a lot of effort on selling its unique products or processes to foreign governments with limited success. In most countries it takes an act of government to effect any changes to the national currency. Unless the country in question doesn't have a national mint, it generally doesn't need a small private mint to make coins for it. A country like China, for instance, bought the whole NBS process and erected its own manufacturing facility. For years the Sherritt Mint's most profitable venture was making local trade tokens. There were one or two contracts fulfilled to strike coins for foreign countries, but generally Sherritt never possessed the capacity to do a large minting run. As stated above, there was always a security issue; the site could never be totally secured. Sherritt could generate all the strip or blanks anyone could ever want, but if I remember correctly, there were only two coining presses, and they were pretty slow.

According to one source within the company (who prefers to remain nameless) Sherritt did play around with manufacturing and minting of bi-metallic coins. There were a few samples made with the rolling mill's logo and denticles that for all intents and purposes looked like twoonies. These coins were made to calibrate, set up the presses and experiment with various pressures required to fuse the two metals into one coin. No doubt some of these coins were made this way explicitly for the twoonie competition, but it was a pretty open secret by that time that Sherritt would not be involved in any part of the manufacturing process. As far as it is known, very few of these in-house strikes made it out, and most of these would have been samples that the company salesmen would have carried around. Most of the subsequent bi-metallic contracts were for coins made in a reverse order; a large brass ring surrounding a nickel core. I looked for examples of the test tokens (in the ENS Sherritt hoard and at the plant) referred to in the CCN article and couldn't find one. Since all of the records are gone, there's also no way to conclude how many of them were actually made or when they were actually struck either.

But there were some other issues going on at the time that also had a role in precluding Sherritt from successfully winning the twoonie contract. One of these was the state of the company itself. By 1995 Sherritt had concluded a deal with Union de Nicquel of Cuba for raw feed for the refinery in Fort Saskatchewan. This immediately killed most of the company's sales to the US and threatened almost every contract abroad too. The relationship with the RCM was beginning to falter around this time as well. Clearly something had to change.

In 1995 Sherritt spun off² its fertilizer business and the specialty metals business. This was done primarily as a result of the Helms-Burton legislation in the US which prevented Sherritt products from entering the US market. The fertilizer business was then spun off to a company called Viridian and then eventually sold to Agrium. The specialty metals division was spun off to Westaim, which had started off as a joint venture between the Alberta government and Sherritt in research and development. This company received the rolling

mill and the specialty powders plants; it looked

at them like a side business and never put much money into them. Westaim's primary focus was always research and development and never production. The mill was allowed to decline, and the coining presses were sold off in 1995. Eventually it closed its doors on the rolling mill for good in 2001 after the last Euro contract was fulfilled. A lot of the rolling mill's demise had an effect on the RCM. After the RCM got its new Winnipeg facility on line, it could manufacture its own plated coinage, and being a Crown Corporation, it could afford to undercut others. Westaim clearly saw the "writing on the wall" and wound the old rolling mill down. It managed to produce one last run of numismatic grade loonies in 2000 before operations ceased. After that, all the RCM had left over was a stockpile of loonie blanks until it got its own plating process finalized.

Sherritt still refines super-pure nickel, but its primary customers these days are overseas stainless steel mills. It no longer makes any type of strip or planchets for any private or national mints anymore. Some may still buy nickel powder or briquettes from Sherritt. Which mints these might be remains confidential. The old rolling mill building is empty save for one furnace.

So in answer to the primary question, "Did Sherritt ever mint a twoonie with denticles?" The answer is emphatically, "No!" Never once did the Sherritt Mint ever have any official RCM twoonie dies in its possession. Ever. Period. End of story. The Sherritt Mint also never had the facilities to cut any master dies by then, and besides, to deface a legal currency die in that fashion is illegal. So it would never have been done. Those coins are probably the result of a counterfeiter obtaining and modifying some old worn and already defaced dies. My source told me that besides any of the legal hurdles, there was no way that they ever would have struck those coins, largely because by 1996 they couldn't. The coining presses were already gone by then. Case closed... (on Sherritt as the suspect at least...)

² The term "spin-off" with regard to businesses means "to divest oneself of assets". In 1995 Sherritt divested itself of 3 of its business units and struck their assets off of the balance sheet. This created 3 new companies that Sherritt proper had some interest in, but these entities were for the most part independent of Sherritt control and direction. Sherritt also handed over all of the pertinent records that pre-dated the spin-off to the companies that were created, and as such there are currently no records left from the Sherritt Mint in the Sherritt archives. When the Westaim Company wound the rolling mill down in 2001, these records and all the coinage samples disappeared from the plantsite. It's anyone's guess as to what happened to it all.





Canada's 21st Century Currency - Polymer

By Pierre Driessen



During the next few years Canada's currency will undergo its most fundamental redesign since paper money was introduced in the country. The radically new bills will bring Canada's currency into the 21st century, and Canadians will begin to see the changes in November 2011.

This redesign of the nation's currency is part of the Bank of Canada's mandate to protect the integrity of Canada's currency, so that Canadians and foreigners can maintain full confidence in the physical soundness of the Canadian dollar. The result of the Next Generation Bank Notes Project, the Bank calls the new bank notes, "the product of an exceptional marriage between design and technology."¹

Why the Changes?

The Bank of Canada cites the reasons for the changes to be:

- 1) staying ahead of counterfeiters
- 2) staying abreast of technological change
- 3) to allow for the adoption of cutting-edge security features and anti-counterfeiting technology
- 4) to improve the durability and lifespan of Canada's bank notes
- 5) to reduce bank note issuance costs
- 6) to reduce the environmental impact of bank note issuance
- 7) since the usual life cycle of a note series is 8 years, the present *Canadian Journey* series has almost reached the end of this time frame.

The Changes

New substrate - polymer:

The most radical of the changes is not found in the graphic design but rather in the substrate material the bank notes will be printed on. The process to find a worthy replacement for traditional cotton bank note paper, begun in the mid-1990's, has been a long process for the Bank of Canada. In the mid 1990s the Bank printed a run of 100,000 experimental \$5 *Birds of Canada* series notes which were paper with a polymer core. The experiment was abandoned due to supplier problems.² Further lessons were learned from the efforts of other central banks. The first international experiments with plastic bank note 'paper' were printed on polyethylene called Tyvek® by Costa Rica, Haiti and the Isle of Man, which proved to be failures.

The Bank of Canada has opted to use the tried and tested polymer material made of a biaxialoriented polypropylene (plastic). This polymer, marketed under the trade name Guardian®, is manufactured by Securrency International of Australia. Its use as a bank note substrate was pioneered by the Reserve Bank of Australia and is now employed globally by the central banks of 32 countries since 1988.

The general graphic design:

The new polymer notes will be the same size as the present ones. Although visually different, the various denominations will retain many of the features from previous series, in one form or another, to permit easy identification and ready adoption. The color scheme of the *Canadian Journey* series will be continued. The use of different color intensities will be even more prominent, as will Canada's national symbol - the maple leaf.

The portraits of political personages presently featured will remain on the face of their respective note. These however have been updated and will now face left, with eyes looking toward the viewer. Various aspects of Canada's parliament buildings will receive a more prominent place. The large number of the denomination will also continue to feature prominently, although its relative position will change.

It is on the back of each note that the series design has been completely altered. Gone are the scenes of hockey players or the Haida canoe. The reverse will now provide scenes celebrating "Canada's achievements at home, around the world and in space. Reflecting the ingenuity, determination and courage of a nation and its people."³

The actual reverse designs of the \$50 and \$100 notes have been made public and can be seen on the following pages. Reverse designs of the \$20, \$10 and \$5 have not been officially published but will have the themes of "Canadian National Vimy Memorial", "The Canadian" train and "Canadaarm 2 and Dextre". The Bank has remained tight lipped



Figure 1 - The face of Canada's new Polymer series \$50, note the new design which has many recognizable features from previous series.

\$50 Polymer series physical details:

issue date:
March 2012

size: 152.4 x 69.85 mm (6.0 x 2.75 inches)

theme: CCGS Amundsen, Research Icebreaker

signatures: left – T. Macklem, right – M.J. Carney

portrait: William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister, 1921 – 30 and 1935 – 48



Figure 2 - The back of Canada's new Polymer series, here you will see a complete redesign, with the Canadian Arctic as theme.

about which note will feature which design. Figure 1 shows the redesign of the face of the \$50 note with many familiar elements from previous series retained.

Figure 2 shows a completely redesigned reverse featuring the Canadian Arctic as theme, reflecting the importance of this region to Canada's economic and national future. Dominant in the design is the Canadian Coast Guard Ship Amundsen, a research icebreaker. There is also a map showing Canada's arctic regions. To the right of the vessel is the word "Arctic" in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit.

In the Bank's official literature

the choice of this design is explained as: *"the vastness and splendour of Canada's northern frontier have helped to shape our cultural identity. The icebreaker plays an important role in the North, keeping Canada's historic passages open, undertaking marine search and rescue, supporting isolated communities, and participating in international environmental research. The CCGS Amundsen helps Canada—the nation with the world's longest stretch of Arctic coastline—to remain at the leading edge of Arctic research, providing the world's oceanographers, geologists and ecologists with unparalleled access to the North."*⁴

There may also be a different message, which fits well with the present rush by Russia, Norway, the USA and Canada to stake claim to the anticipated vast natural resources of the arctic region and the challenges by non-arctic nations to these claims. While technically a research icebreaker, CCGS Amundsen also serves to wave the Canadian flag and thus assert Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

Figure 3 below shows the design of the face of the \$100 bill. Here again are found many familiar elements held over from previous series, which make the note easily recognizable, and it is



Figure 3 - The face of the new Polymer series \$100, note the new design which has many recognizable features from previous series.

\$100 Polymer series physical details:

issue date:
November 2011

size: 152.4 x 69.85 mm (6.0 x 2.75 inches)

theme: medical innovation

signatures: left – T. Macklem, right – M.J. Carney

portrait: Sir Robert L. Borden, Prime Minister, 1911–20–30 and 1935 – 48



Figure 4 - The reverse of the new Polymer series \$100, medical research is the theme here.

hoped the series will be readily adopted by Canadians. The theme of the \$100 note is medical innovation. In the Bank of Canada's press releases, the theme is explained as, *"Canadians have long been at the frontiers of medical research and as a result have helped to save millions of lives worldwide. Notable Canadian contributions include pioneering the use of insulin to treat diabetes, DNA and genetic research, the invention of the pacemaker, and the first hospital-to-hospital robot-assisted surgery."*⁵

Shown is a researcher at a microscope, denoting Canada's

long history of and commitment to medical research. To the right of the researcher is a strand of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), a reference to the cutting-edge research Canadian scientists have and continue to perform in human genetics.

Below the researcher can be seen an electrocardiogram (ECG), which symbolizes Canadian contributions to heart health, and with note the invention of the pacemaker in 1950 by John Hopps. To the left of the large number 100, is a vial of insulin, which obviously refers to its discovery in 1921 by Canadian researchers Charles Best and

Frederick Banting. This saved and continues to save and improve the lives of millions of people around the world. It is a true medical miracle, unlike so many of the "cures and medicines" peddled by pharmaceutical companies today.

So what makes Canada's new notes so special if the use of polymer is already widespread? It is the unique use of the characteristics of the new substrate and the incorporation of cutting-edge security features which sets this series apart; a combination of security measures unlike any employed elsewhere.

Security features:

The polymer substrate itself is clear and it is this feature, which has been put to good use by the Bank. These security measures are applicable to all notes of the series, but the details within each feature differ for each denomination.

Transparent window:

The most prominent of the security features is the large transparent window on the right side of the note. Within this window is a large metallic security strip, which has at the top a portrait that matches that of the large portrait in the centre of the note.

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Figure 5 - Security features found on the face of the new Polymer series, certain details such as the metallic portrait and building, the small numbers and the hidden numbers vary per denomination

Directly below the metallic portrait are transparent letters, which spell 'CANADA'. Below this and throughout the transparent window are small numbers that match with the denomination of the note.

Further down is a depiction of an aspect of the Canadian buildings of Parliament. The particular aspect is different for each denomination.

The area around the metallic

strip should be transparent. Along the outer edges of the transparent window maple leaves flow into the window from the non-transparent printed areas.

Intaglio printing:

Long a standard security feature on bank notes, its use has been continued in the new series, but only in select areas. These areas of raised printing can be found by the large denomination number, on the lapel of the large portrait and the words Banque du Canada / Bank of Canada.

Frosted Maple Leaf:

Above the large denomination number is found a frosted maple leaf with a transparent outline. Within the maple leaf are hidden numbers corresponding to the note's face value, which can be seen using a single-point light source.

When the bill is flipped over, the security features of the large transparent window as found on the face are repeated in the same detail, except in mirror image.

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are additional security features, which permit money counting and vending machines to verify note denomination and authenticity. The Bank is however tight lipped about these.

The series illustrations were designed by the Canadian Bank Note Company, following a public consultation process with Canadians in what the Bank refers to as "innovation workshops". Note Printing Australia (NPA), a subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of Australia, will supply the polymer and security features. The polymer material is to be manufactured by the Australian company Securrency International. BA International and Canadian Bank Note Company will print the actual notes themselves in Canada.⁶

The Bank of Canada admits that the initial printing of this new series will be approximately two times more expensive than previous cotton paper based series, but maintains that these costs will be offset by the expected increase in the lifespan of the polymer note. It is estimated that the new bills will last a minimum of 2.5 times longer than traditional cotton based bank notes; perhaps considerably longer than that. This will reduce the need for replacement notes and the associated printing, transportation and administration costs. In addition, the new security features are



Figure 6 - Security features found on the reverse of the new Polymer series, certain details such as the metallic portrait and building, the small numbers and the hidden numbers vary per denomination.

When the bill is tilted, the colors of the portrait and building in the metallic strip shift. The use of the security features of the large transparent window in combination with the metallic security strip, the color shifting of the portrait and building, and the use of the frosted maple leaf and hidden numbers, make the Bank of Canada Polymer series notes unique in the world.

In addition to these public security measures, there

expected to reduce the need to change and add additional security features during the lifespan of the series, as was necessitated by the increase in counterfeiting experienced during the early part of the *Canadian Journey* series.

At its height in 2004 the *Canadian Journey* series saw 500 counterfeits per one million notes in circulation - a very high percentage by both

Canadian and international standards. This caused a crisis of confidence in the integrity of Canada's currency, with many retailers and individuals refusing to accept higher denomination bills. Counterfeiting was brought under control by 2010, when the rate dropped to below 50 counterfeits per one million notes in circulation. This reversal was expensive, requiring additional security features be added to the current series and an extensive education campaign by the Bank.⁷

Also expected to have environmental benefits are the anticipated increase in lifespan and the reduced need for replacement notes. The move away from cotton-based paper will certainly have benefits, as cotton, despite its green image, is a very polluting crop, requiring vast amounts of water and agricultural chemicals.

There are also plans to recycle polymer notes taken in at the

end of their useful life.

In addition, the Bank hopes that the new series with its innovative security measures will keep counterfeiters at bay. At the same time, the Bank states that in its efforts to stay ahead of the problem, it has already begun the process of developing new and improved cutting-edge security features for a series to replace the *Polymer* series, or if necessary to provide additional measures to protect the integrity of the series just rolling out.

The new \$100 polymer notes will be issued in November 2011, the \$50 will follow in March 2012, while the \$20, \$10 and \$5 notes are scheduled for release in 2013.

Notes:

- 1) "Paying with Polymer: Developing Canada's New Bank Notes." Spencer, Charles, Bank of Canada, Currency Department, 2011, p. 1
- 2) Ibid, footnote 1
- 3) "Canada's new polymer notes", Bank of Canada press kit 2011 1-F/P (05-11).
- 4) Bank of Canada website [http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer/\\$50 Note - Design Features](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer/$50 Note - Design Features)

- 5) Bank of Canada website [http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer/\\$100 Note - Design Features](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer/$100 Note - Design Features)
- 6) "Backgrounder on Canada's new polymer bank note series", Bank of Canada, 2011
- 7) "Paying with Polymer: Developing Canada's New Bank Notes.", p.2 - 3

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- Bank of Canada website <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer>
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Continued from page 15 - Ancient Medieval



Constans the genitive case, otherwise called the possessive case, was used. In Nicomedia the legend reads FL. IVL. CONSTANTIS NOB. C. In full this would read FLAVII IVLII NOBILISSIMI CAESARIS. Loosely translated this becomes "(coin) of Flavius Julius Constans the Most Noble Heir". This coin was most likely minted for only a short period at the beginning of 334 A.D. It was quickly replaced by the obverse legend FL CONSTANS NOB CAES. However in Siscia the genitive case lingered. Starting in 334 A.D. and continuing until 337 A.D. The obverse legend used by Constans was FL. CONSTANTIS BEA. CAES. In full this would read FLAVII CONSTANTIS BEATITVDINIS CAESARIS. Loosely translated this would be (coin) of Flavius Constans the Happy One, Heir". In 337 the title



was changed to FL. CONSTANTIS NOB. C. Constans seems to have tried to create some separation between himself and his two older brothers. In this he was only partly successful. Just at Siscia, a mint he most likely controlled, was he able to exercise his policies. They were ignored by the mints controlled by his father and his two brothers.

As noted above the GLORIA EXERICTVS coinage is very common. Normally the coins are minted in large numbers, and their small module makes them unimpressive. However they were minted during a pivotal period of Roman history, and thus what the coinage alludes to of the social and political history of the time does make them worthy of respect.



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

New Membership Applications

**Jon Radel
John Glockler
Dylan Kerr
Lee Bachand
Guy Krepps
Fred Hildebrandt
David Hunka
Connor Lammers
Brennan Waters**

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

Coming Events

October 12, 2011 - ENS October Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Snacks provided.

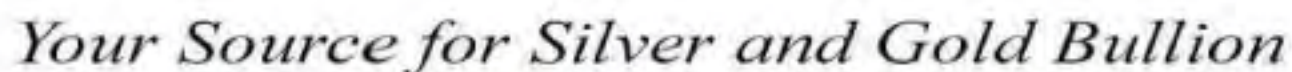
November 5 & 6, 2011 - Edmonton's Coin Show and Sale, Edmonton Hotel & Conference Centre, 4520 - 76 Ave, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 0A5, dealers wishing to attend call 780-270-6312.

November 9, 2011 - ENS November Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Snacks provided.

December 14, 2011 - ENS December Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Snacks provided. Year end awards night.

January 11, 2012 - ENS January Meeting - Royal Alberta Museum, 7:15 pm start. Snacks provided.

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



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