

NUMISMATICS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

NEWS AND DISCUSSION ON ANCIENT NUMISMATICS, CLASSICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY, AND CULTURAL PROPERTY ISSUES

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Disaster in Germany: The Royal Collection of Hannover for sale !!!

In 1983 the coin collection of the Kings of Hannover was bought by the Deutsche Bank, who now plans to sell it to a coin dealer. The "Niedersächsisches Münzkabinett der Deutschen Bank" is one of the most important feudal collections in Germany and one of the 25 most important collections in Europe. It was managed in close cooperation with the "Landesmuseum Hannover" and became one of the important numismatic institutions in Europe. It is well known for its exhibitions and publications. The head of the coin cabinet, Dr. Reiner Cunz, is chairman of the German Numismatic Commission, vice president of the International Committee of Money and Banking Museums ICOMON, board member of the German Numismatic Society, member of the Brunswik Academy of Sciences and other academic societies.

A wave with letters of solidarity was sent to leading politicians in Germany, such as Prime Minister Christian Wulff (Hannover) and Bundeskulturminister Bernd Neumann (Berlin) and to the CEO of the Deutsche Bank, Josef Ackermann (Frankfurt).

This is truly disturbing news. Several museum collections are currently being sold off on account of the recession and have been in the news recently, stirring much controversy. These decisions are often made by administrators and businessmen who are only concerned about the bottom line and willing to cut things like art collections, academic programs, and research positions.

The sale of this important numismatic collection would be a great loss to numismatic scholarship. It should not be simply be divided up among bidders. I encourage all readers to send letters to those responsible for the decision to sell the collection and to the named German politicians. Dr. Lucia Travaini (Milan/Rome) has a page on her website, about the affair.

FYI: her short anecdote about the coins from Rome that Mussolini asked to be set aside to be melted are indeed the coins finds from Rome that Prof. Dr. Maria R.-Alföldi and other numismatists at Frankfurt later identified and catalogued. The finds still await publication for various reason, though Prof. Dr. von Kaenel and Prof. Dr. R.-Alföldi have made the unpublished list available to several researchers who have already demonstrated the great value of this resource in

their published works. These particular coin finds, which were almost lost due to the whims of a politician, are the most important corpus of coin finds from the capital of the Roman Empire.

It would indeed be a great scholarly loss for another old collection to be sold off as Deutsche Bank simply seeks to make up for losses, unconcerned or uninformed about the educational and scholarly value of the collection they wish to sell.

BY NATHAN T. ELKINS

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I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Greek and Roman Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri, writing a dissertation on "Architectural Coin Types: Reflections of Roman Society." I hold a B.A., magna cum laude, in Archaeology and Classical Studies from the University of Evansville (Indiana) and a M.A., with distinction, in the City of Rome from the University of Reading (United Kingdom). Some of my research on numismatics and archaeology has received some recognition, first by the Parkes-Weber Memorial Prize and Medal of the Royal Numismatic Society in 2004 for a scholarly contribution to numismatics by one younger than 23 and secondly by the AIA Graduate Student Paper Award Honorable Mention in 2006. In 2006 and 2007, I received a DAAD grant and conducted research at the Goethe Universität – Frankfurt, an important center for the treatment of ancient coins in archaeological contexts. In 2008, I returned to Frankfurt as a Mitarbeiter with the Martberg Projekt, for which I identified coins for Fundmünzen der Antike. I now work in the department with the cast and photo collection and engage in research and teaching.