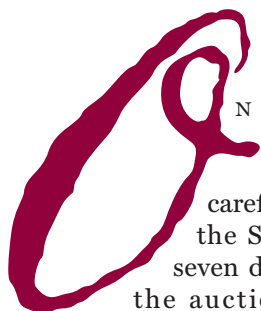


Bibliophile's Paradise

*Classic coin references abound in private collections
and libraries, as well as on the auction block.*



ON JANUARY 9, 2010, a remarkable numismatic library, carefully assembled by the Stack family over seven decades, will cross the auction block at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in Manhattan. Conducted by George Frederick Kolbe Fine Numismatic Books, the public sale will feature volumes from the numismatic firm founded by brothers Morton and Joseph, a New York institution managed in recent decades by Norman, Benjamin, Harvey, Susan and Lawrence Stack.

For more than 50 years, a good portion of the library resided in antique bookcases lining the walls of Harvey Stack's office. (I remember marveling at his exhaustive collection of auction catalogs, including a complete set published by the Chapman brothers.) According to Kolbe, "Other portions of the library were, for many years, located throughout the main floor of the firm's New York City retail location at 123 West 57th Street, and many of the great classic works on ancient and foreign coins and medals were carefully arranged on the second floor in the Coin Galleries offices."

The illustrated auction catalog will be arranged in two parts: rare and classic books on American coins, medals and tokens; and key works on ancient, medieval and modern numismatics. Printed copies, priced at \$35, can be reserved by contacting Kolbe at 909-338-6527, e-mail GFK@numislit.com, or access the catalog online several weeks before the sale at www.numislit.com.

Some of the American highlights include a leather-bound, photographic



◀ George Kolbe's January 2010 sale will include Joseph Stack's leather-bound, photographic record of Colonel E.H.R. Green's collection of U.S. gold.

collecting published?

One of the earliest texts, complete with illustrations, is that by Veronese archaeologist and scholar Giovanni de Matociis,

record of Colonel E.H.R. Green's fabled collection of \$2½, \$5 and \$10 gold pieces; inventories of Louis Eliasberg's incomparable collection; and historic references on large cents from the library of legendary collector Henry Hines, complete with letters and notes from Hines and collectors Howard Newcomb and George Clapp.

Among collectable references on ancient and foreign numismatic topics is a complete, original set of Georgii Mikhailovic's monumental work on Russian coins; sets of the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* series; a set of *Corpus Nummorum Italicorum*; and classic references on Renaissance medals. Cataloging is ongoing, and Kolbe anticipates a second sale later next year.

Early References

News of the sale of the Stack family's library got me thinking about numismatic publications in general. When was the first book about coin

handwritten in Latin around 1320. (The original resides in the Vatican Library.) Following Johannes Gutenberg's development of movable type (c. 1439) and the printing of his famous Bible, the first classical reference was produced in Mainz, Germany, in 1465. By the end of 1500, more than 350 printers in over 70 locations throughout Europe had printed more than 1,500 separate editions of books, some of which had numismatic themes.

In the 16th century, the Netherlands was a major center of numismatic activity. I surmised that where you find coins collectors, you're likely to find books on the subject. Early Dutch collectors were, by and large, literate, wealthy men who had both the time and money to collect coins and the books about them. The latter were costly to make; printed in limited quantities for the small number of coin collectors; hard to find; and expensive to buy. An average ☉



► The ANA's Dwight N. Manley Numismatic Library has a rare 1517 edition of Andrea Fulvio's *Illustrium Imagines*, believed to be the first printed, illustrated numismatic book.



printing might have been 200 books; larger press runs were 1,000 to 1,500, according to S.H. Steinberg's *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (1996).

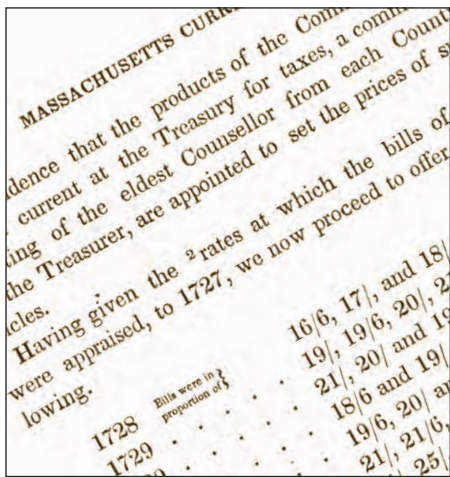
Among the first to systematically collect coin books and catalogs, in addition to the coins themselves, was the famous French bibliophile Jean Grolier de Servin (1479-1565). He managed to assemble 3,000 finely bound books, which still are actively sought by both bibliophiles and numismatists. (It was not uncommon then, and to a certain extent even now, to find coin collectors collecting books, and book collectors collecting coins.) In his library was what generally is believed to be the first numismatic book ever printed: the 1514 edition of *De Asse et Partibus* by Guillaume Budé (1467-1540), published by Josse Badius (1462-1535), a printing pioneer from Asche, near Brussels.

Servin possessed *Illustrium Imagines* by Andrea Fulvio (1470-1527),

printed in Rome in 1517 and believed to be the first printed, illustrated numismatic book. (A copy resides in the ANA's Dwight N. Manley Numismatic Library in Colorado Springs.) He also owned a rare and unfinished 1565 manuscript by Enea Vico (1523-67), who today is considered the first scientific numismatist.

Jean Grolier de Servin was succeeded by Hubertus Goltzius (1526-83), a Dutch numismatist, writer and bibliophile considered by many to be the father of antique coin book collecting. Italian Charles Patin (1633-93) followed in his footsteps, not only collecting coins, books and coin books, but writing about coins as well. The last of the original master book collectors was Jean Foy-Vaillant (1632-1706), official antiquary of King Louis XIV of France and a numismatic author himself.

Today, the world's largest collection of pre-1600 coin books resides at



▲ In 1839 Dr. Joseph Barlow Felt published *An Historical Account of Massachusetts Currency*, which may be the first American book about coins or paper money. An original edition resides in the ANA Library's Frank L. Katen Rare Book Room.

Belgium's Ghent University. The school was established in October 1817 by William I (1772-1842), King of the Netherlands and Grand Duke of Luxembourg. (Coincidentally, he was dubbed the "Copper King" for the massive quantities of copper coins minted during his reign.)

The first American coin or currency book may well be *An Historical Account of Massachusetts Currency* by Dr. Joseph Barlow Felt (1789-1869), an antiquarian, historian, librarian and, in his day, well-known author of six books. Published in 1839 by Perkins and Marvin of Boston, it could have been written as early as 1808, when Felt was 19 years old. (The ANA Library has a copy of this historic reference as well.) Interestingly, the publisher, Jacob Perkins (1766-1849), was a goldsmith, die-sinker and engraver, having previously engraved hubs for Massachusetts coppers and plates for bank notes. berman@money.org