

Coin Chronicles

The Newsletter of the Trenton Numismatic Club

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Ducats of the 20th Century

By: John Janeczek

This article will discuss the gold coin known as the Ducat. This has been one of the major trade coins in the world for hundreds of years. The Ducat is a gold coin generally containing .1108 oz. of gold, with a fineness of .986. This is a very high gold content for a coin as U.S. circulating gold coinage was .900 fine.

The term ducat comes from the Latin ducatus, which pertains to a duke, a high-ranking nobleman ruling a certain tract of land. The first ducats are said to have been struck in 1140 by King Roger of Sicily, who was also Duke of Apulia.

Several European countries have produced Ducats over the years. A few of these

coins produced during the 20th Century are discussed below.

The Dutch Royal Mint has been striking Ducats with a similar design for over 400 years and still does so. These Ducats bear the image of a Knight on the obverse holding seven arrows, representing the seven provinces of the Netherlands at the time the coins were first made. The Latin inscription translates to 'Union Makes Small Things Grow.' This alludes that each of the provinces of the Netherlands are insignificant on their own, but are strong when unified. The reverse inscription reads 'Gold Coin of the Kingdom of the Netherlands by Imperial Law.' This indicates that the Ducat is struck to the same standards as coins of the Holy Roman Empire, which eventually became the Austrian Empire. This shows how these coins were used as trade coins, being exchanged at the same value wherever they were used in commerce.

After World War I, the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian Empires collapsed. This upheaval caused the creation of several new na-

tions within Europe. These countries formed new systems of currency, but the fame and commercial success of the Ducat ensured that it would endure.

The Austrian Empire struck Ducats and the nation of Austria does so to the present time. This 1915-dated Ducat bears the image and the beginning of the titles of Emperor Franz Josef in Latin. The reverse bears the Imperial two-headed eagle and the rest of his titles. These coins are commonly held by investors because of their enduring value. The 1915 dated coins are still struck. The Austrian Mint also produces a larger 4-Ducat coin for sale.

The new nation of Czechoslovakia struck Ducats at the Kremnica Mint from 1923 until 1939, with a small mintage of 500 coins in 1951. These coins bear the Czechoslovakian coat of arms on the obverse. The reverse bears the image of St. Wenceslaus with the inscription, 'Do not let us or our descendants perish.' This quote is taken from a famous Czech patriotic song dating from the 12th Century. St. Wenceslaus was a real

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COIN SHOW SCHEDULE

By Bill Liatys

November 2017

LOCAL SHOW SCHEDULE

PARSIPPANY *November 5th Sunday 9 AM – 3 PM*
Pal Bldg 33 Baldwin Road Parsnippany NJ

BURLINGTON *November 12th Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM*
Burlington Mason Lodge Route 541 Burlington, NJ

TREVOSE *November 19th Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM*
Trevose Fire house 4900 Street Road Trevose PA

TRI-STATE COIN & STAMP SHOW *November 26th Sunday 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM*
Sheraton Bucks County 400 Oxford Valley Road Langhorne, PA

TRENTON NUMISMATIC FALL COIN SHOW

October 29 Sunday 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Ramada Inn Exit 7 NJ Turnpike 1083 Route 206 North Bordentown, NJ

WHITMAN COIN & COLLECTIBLES *November 9th-12th Thursday – Sunday*
Thursday – Noon – 6 PM Friday – Saturday - 10 AM – 6 PM Sunday – 10 AM – 3 PM
Baltimore Convention Center One W. Pratt Street Baltimore, MD

person, in addition to being a character in a Christmas carol. He was the Duke of Bohemia, which is now part of the Czech Republic, until his assassination in 935. St. Wenceslaus is considered a national hero to this day.

The former country of Yugoslavia also struck Ducats between the world wars to the customary fineness. These Ducats bears the image of King Alexander with his titles in Serbian. The words are written in the Cyrillic alphabet. They bear small counterstamps, representing one of the provinces of Yugoslavia. The sword, for instance, represents Bosnia. My research indicates that this is a purity mark, somewhat similar to the chop-marks seen on other trade coins. The reverse bears the Yugoslavian arms, the denomination, and the inscription 'Kingdom of Yugoslavia.' The Yugoslav Ducats were only produced from 1931 until 1934. Less than 400,000 were struck.

The study of Ducats is a fascinating part of the numismatic world. These trade coins have endured for centuries, and are still being struck and collected.



Two Cent Pieces



The two-cent piece was produced by the Mint of the United States for circulation from 1864 to 1872 and for collectors in 1873. Designed by James B. Longacre, there were decreasing mintages each year. It was abolished by the Mint Act of 1873.

The economic turmoil of the American Civil War caused government-issued coins, even

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the non-silver Indian Head cent, to vanish from circulation, hoarded by the public. Despite opposition, Congress passed the Coinage Act of 1864, authorizing bronze two-cent pieces. In late 1861, the Reverend Mark R. Watkinson of Ridleyville, Pennsylvania, had requested that some reference to God be placed on the coinage in that time of war. IN GOD WE TRUST had been inspired by "The Star Spangled Banner", where a later stanza includes the line, "And this be our motto, 'In God Is Our Trust' ".

As the mottoes to be placed on coinage were prescribed by the 1837 act, a legislative change was needed. The act which created the two-cent piece authorized the Mint Director, with the Secretary of the Treasury's approval, to prescribe the designs and mottoes to be used. Longacre's two-cent piece was the first coin inscribed with "In God We Trust". The motto was popularized by the new coin; on March 3, 1865 Congress passed legislation ordering its use on all coins large enough to permit it. Since 1938, "In God We Trust" has been used on all American coins. The obverse design is a Longacre version of the Great Seal of the United States. His design focuses on the shield, as a defensive weapon, signifying strength and self-protection through unity. The upper part of the shield, or "chief", symbolizes Congress, while the 13 vertical stripes, or "paleways", represent the states. The entire shield symbolizes the strength of the federal government through the unity of the states. The crossed arrows represent non-aggression, but

imply readiness against attack. The laurel branches, taken from Greek tradition, symbolize victory. In heraldic engraving, vertical lines represent red, clear areas white and horizontal lines blue, thus the shield symbolizes red, white and blue and is meant to evoke the American flag. The reverse contains the denomination "2 CENTS" within a somewhat ornate wheat wreath. The rest of the coin is filled with the name of the country.



Give us your two cents!

Send an article to Coin Chronicles.
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Meeting Schedule

The Trenton Numismatic Club meets on the fourth Monday of each month at the

HAMILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
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HAMILTON, NJ 08619-3809

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