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TWO SCUDI AND ONE SCUDO PIECES OF THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA

Graeme Stephens

The Knights of Malta have had a number of name changes and undergone a number of transformations. Known as ‘Hospitallers of Jerusalem’ from their inception in about 1113 until 1309, the members were called ‘Knights of Rhodes’ from 1309 till 1522 and have been called ‘Knights of Malta’ since then up to the present day.

The original objective of the order was to provide shelter and medical assistance to pilgrims visiting Jerusalem from all over Europe and particularly to participants in the various crusades. Their work was undertaken by the provision of hospices or shelters, and infirmaries, which were maintained along the various pilgrimage routes.

The Headquarters of the Order were successively at Jerusalem (1099-1187), Acre (1187-1291), Cyprus (1291-1310), Rhodes (1310-1522), Malta (1530-1798), Trieste (1798-1799), St Petersburg (1799-1803), Catania (1803-1825), Ferrara (1826-1834) and Rome (1834-Present).

The present Order is largely a symbolic charitable organization. The original rules of the Knights of Malta order required that it maintain at its expense five physicians and three surgeons, while the brothers carried out the duties of nurses. While this noble work continued throughout their history the provision of armed escorts to pilgrims resulted in the order also having a military wing which, together with its related but independent order, the Knights Templar, soon grew into a substantial force.

The Knights of Malta came to distinguish themselves in battles with the Muslims, its soldiers wearing a black surcoat with a white cross, while the Templars wore a white mantel with a red cross.

By the mid-12th century, the order was clearly divided into military brothers and those who worked with the sick. It was still a religious order and had useful privileges granted by the Papacy, for example, the order was exempt from all authority save that of the Pope, and it paid no tithes and was allowed its own religious buildings.



Knight Templar & Knight Hospitaller (later Knight of Malta)

Image Source: <http://www.lepantoinstitute.org/knights-of-malta>

Many of the more substantial Christian fortifications in the Holy Land were the work of either the Templars or Hospitallers. At the height of the Kingdom of Jerusalem the Hospitallers held seven great forts and 140 other estates in the area.

After seven years of moving from place to place in Europe, the Knights were re-established on Malta in 1530 by the order of Pope Clement VIII and King Charles I of Spain, with the consent of their feudal landlord the King of Sicily. Their annual fee for the island was a single Maltese falcon, which they had to give annually on All Souls Day to the Viceroy of Sicily, who acted as the King's representative. (This historical fact was used as the plot base in Dashiell Hammett's famous book *The Maltese Falcon*.)

Their original base in Malta was Fort St Angelo in the centre of the Grand Harbour. It was from there that the renamed Knights of Malta continued their actions against piracy, their fleet targeting the Barbary pirates.

Although they had only a small number of ships, they nevertheless quickly drew the ire of the Ottomans who were less than happy to see the order resettled. Accordingly, they assembled another massive army in order to dislodge the Knights from Malta, and in 1565 invaded, starting the Great Siege of Malta.



Fort St Angelo

Image Source: <https://www.timesofmalta.com>

Most of Malta's cities were destroyed and about half the Knights died in battle. But things changed dramatically when a relief force arrived from Spain. In the ensuing retreat the Ottomans lost some 30,000 men and allowed the Knights of Malta to secure the island for a time. After the siege a new city had to be built - the present city of Valletta, so named in memory of the Order's valiant grand master Jean de la Vallette who had sustained the siege.

Following the naval victory at Lepanto in 1571, when a force including the Knights of Malta soundly defeated the Ottomans, the Knights continued to attack pirates, and their base became a centre for slave trading, selling captured Africans and Turks and conversely freeing Christian slaves. Malta remained a slave market until well into the eighteenth century. It required a thousand slaves to equip merely one galley of the order.

In 1789, France erupted in revolution and anti-aristocratic furore, forcing many French knights and nobles to flee for their lives. Many of the Order's traditional sources of revenue from France were lost permanently. Adding insult to injury, the French Revolutionary Government seized the assets and properties of the Order in France in 1792. During this decline, the Order's Grand Master was Emmanuel de Rohan (1775-97). He was a French aristocrat and did his best to revive the principles and the tenets of the Order. But it was too late. The decline of the Order had already begun and could not be stopped.

By this time the Knights were a new generation and had long circumvented their monastic vows and the vows of poverty. The Ottoman Empire was on the wane and the original motivation of the Order had become superfluous. The ships of the Order were a magnificent spectacle, gorgeous and majestic, but no longer suited for the time. This was a period of decay and to replenish his depleted treasury de Rohan had to resort to selling these vessels to the Kings of Naples and Spain. Incidents between the Knights and the Maltese people were also frequent during his troubled days.

After the French Revolution the Order was despoiled of its property in France, though de Rohan had rightly refused to join the French against England, who was mistress of the sea.

Throughout his rule the Grand Master did his best to save the Order from total destruction and to further the well-being of the Maltese people. No wonder, therefore, that when he died desolation spread throughout the island.

My two coins were both issued in 1796 by Grand Master Emmanuel de Rohan. They are a silver two scudi (12 Tari) piece and a silver one scudo (6 Tari) piece, both in excellent condition.



2 Scudi, Knights of Malta, 1796

Obverse: F EMMANUEL DE ROHAN M M, Bust of de Rohan, right.

Reverse: Insignia of the Knights of Malta surrounded by a wreath of leaves and surmounted by a crown. Date above, value mark S 2 below.



1 Scudo, Knights of Malta, 1796

Obverse: F EMMANUEL DE ROHAN M M, Bust of de Rohan, right.

Reverse: Insignia of the Knights of Malta surrounded by a wreath of leaves and surmounted by a crown. Date above, value mark S 1 below.

The last coins minted by the order were in 1798, but the de Rohan one scudo and two scudi pieces described here were the last of those denominations ever minted by the Knights of Malta.

I purchased the coins from a trusted dealer in Portobello Road Market in London.

The Mediterranean stronghold of Malta was finally captured by Napoleon in 1798 when he made his expedition to Egypt. As a ruse, Napoleon asked for safe harbor to resupply his ships, and then turned against his hosts once safely inside Valletta.

New Grand Master Ferdinand von Hompesch failed to anticipate or prepare for this threat, provided no effective leadership, and readily capitulated to Napoleon. This was a terrible affront to most of the Knights desiring to defend their stronghold and sovereignty.

The Order continued to exist, but in a diminished form and never returned to power.

PROVENANCE

John McDonald

Except for those who specialise in new issues, such as those from the Royal Australian Mint or the Perth Mint, we will all have coins that were produced tens, hundreds, or even thousands of years ago and have probably passed through many hands before they eventually found their way to us.

At first, most of them would simply have passed quickly from hand to hand in everyday trade as they were used to make all sorts of purchases. Perhaps a Roman denarius was handed to a legionary stationed in Britain as part of his pay before going towards a new, warmer, woollen cloak. A silver penny of Elizabeth I might have been spent for standing room admission to the Globe theatre to watch one of William Shakespeare's plays, or in 1919 a newly minted Australian florin of George V might have bought a few beers for a digger and his mates recently returned from the battlefields of World War I.

But at some point in time someone decided that a coin was interesting enough to be kept rather than spent, and so they became a collector. The coin would then have gone from one collector to another, often passing through the hands of dealers along the way.

Writing about ancient coins in particular, Dr Alan Walker of Nomos AG (Luzern, Switzerland) recently put it like this;

'People collect coins for a plethora of reasons, but one is the way that having a coin in one's hands puts a modern collector into a kind of direct contact with everyone who previously had any connection with that coin. Not only can there be numerous dealers involved with a coin, but there can often be several previous owners, whether collectors or institutions, as well as the coin's finder or discoverer; but before that there was a whole other group of people involved with it: the last owner who hid or lost the coin, the various people who used the coin in trade or kept it as wealth, the man (and it probably was a man) who cut the dies used to strike the coin, the men who made the coin, and the officials who authorized it. Every one of these people would have a story to tell us, if only we knew them and they could speak to us; thus, romance enters coin collecting!'

The word we use to describe the ownership history of a coin is ‘*provenance*’. But the provenance of a coin does more than bring some romance into our hobby. A good provenance can considerably enhance both the numismatic significance and the financial value of a coin.

If a coin can be traced back for a long period of time, perhaps even to the day it was minted, or to the day it was unearthed in the case of an ancient coin, it becomes more significant, particularly if it was once owned by a recognised expert or resided in the collection of a major institution. Apart from adding a premium to its value, good provenance also greatly reduces the risk of a coin being a fake because we know that along the way it has been subjected to scrutiny by a range of experienced collectors and dealers.

However, we must always remember that provenance can be faked just as a coin can. So, if you are thinking of spending a substantial amount on a coin that seems to have good provenance you should try to independently verify as many aspects of its history as you can. Did the former owner or named collection really exist? Did the coin appear in the catalogue of the institution where it was supposed to have been held? Did it appear in the right auction catalogues on the right dates?

If a coin you buy has some associated provenance information, you should make sure that you get it as part of the deal, and that you preserve it.

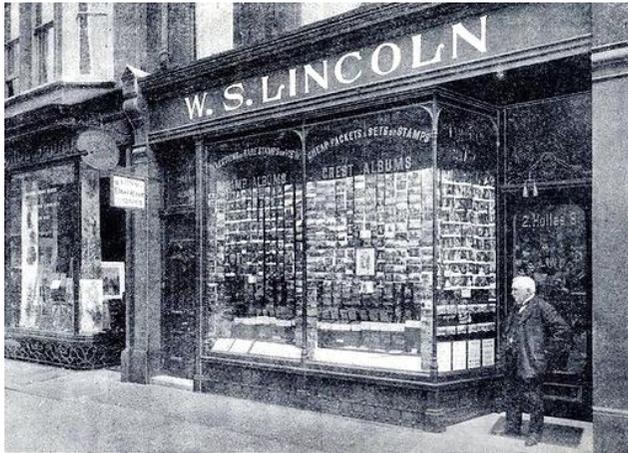
A few examples follow of coins with especially good provenance. The first is an ancient Roman denarius of Herrenius Etruscus who briefly shared power with his father Trajan Decius (AD 250-251).



*Denarius of Herrenius Etruscus, AD 250-251,
with W. C. Boyd's Ticket*

This coin came with the original ticket of the English collector W. C. Boyd (1840-1906) who was a Treasurer of the Royal Numismatic Society in London. The old ticket shows that the coin was purchased from the long defunct English coin and stamp dealer W. S. Lincoln on 7th April 1888, giving it provenance that goes back 130 years. The Boyd collection was auctioned by Baldwin's in 2005.

Lincoln established premises in Oxford Street, London, around 1859 and after his death the business continued under the management of his son until about 1930.



W. S. Lincoln's London Shop

Image source; http://globalphilatelic.blogspot.com.au/2012_06_01_archive.html

Ancient coins often come from buried hoards that have been unearthed in relatively recent times. If the hoard from which a coin was sourced is known, this gives it excellent provenance.

The next example falls into that category. It is an Antoninianus of the Gallic emperor, Tetricus I, dating from AD 272-273.

It was part of the Braithwell Hoard, consisting of 1,331 coins of the mid to late 3rd Century, unearthed in 2002 near the village of Braithwell in South Yorkshire, England.



*Antoninianus of Tetricus I, AD 272-273,
ex Braithwell Hoard*

Of course, we don't have buried hoards of ancient coins here in Western Australia, but we do have something broadly comparable in the form of coins recovered from the seabed from the predominantly Dutch ships that were wrecked along our coast in the 17th and 18th Centuries. These include previously unknown coins struck at the Middelburg mint in Zeeland, Holland, in 1711. The entire mintages of these were consigned to Batavia (Jakarta) on the Dutch East Indies Company ship the *Zuytdorp*, which was wrecked on the coast north of Geraldton before that year was out.

Examples of shipwreck coins can only be legally owned if they are accompanied by a sale permit and certificate from the West Australian Museum, which provide wonderful provenance, leading directly back to 17th or 18th Century Holland.



Cemented Mass of Coins from the Wreck of the Zuytdorp
Image source: <http://www.heritage-activities.nl/ancods/voc-zd.html>

An example of an important Australian coin with unusually good provenance is the so-called 'Fonrobert Holey Dollar'.

Jules Fonrobert (1831-1879) was a wealthy German industrialist who collected world coins. His collection included a holey dollar that appeared in an 1878 auction catalogue (Adolph Weyl, 1878, Lot 97) when it reportedly sold for 22 marks. This is said to be the earliest known public sale of a holey dollar. After that the coin can apparently be traced through a series of auction catalogues to a 2007 sale by Noble Numismatics in Sydney, giving it a provenance spanning about 140 years.

The last example is a coin that seems to have an amazing ownership history going back at least 400 years. In his recent article, Dr Alan Walker described a Double Sestertius of the Roman emperor Trajan Decius, minted in Rome during his short reign from AD 249 to 251.



Double Sestertius of Trajan Decius, AD 249-251.

Image source: news from nomos, 18 April 2017.

This coin came from the collection of the Swiss doctor W.F. Stoecklin (1888-1975) and his son Dr. W.M. Stoecklin (1915-1981). Alan Walker describes it in this way:

'... it has a good patina, however it also has a disfiguring mark in the field behind the emperor's head. This mark, in fact, makes this coin extremely exciting! He (Stoecklin) acquired this coin from the Zürich doctor L. Naegeli at some point in the late 1940s or early 1950s ... Naegeli bought the coin from Jakob Hirsch, who bought it from his own auction XVII of 1934: it came from the collection of the famous English archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans (the discoverer of the Palace of Minos at Knossos). Sir Arthur had inherited this coin from his father, the equally famous scholar and numismatist, Sir John Evans, but where Sir John got this coin is unknown. At the time both of these great collectors had this coin the 'pit' behind the emperor's head had been carefully filled with some sort of colored lacquer as a disguise, but at some later point it was partially broken out. What it reveals is a typical oval pit, which would have contained a gold plated eagle, the collection mark of one of the great Italian Renaissance collections, that of the Estes of Ferrara (it has also been suggested that the mark is that of the Gonzagas but further evidence now seems to show that it is definitely from the Estes). This means that this coin's collecting history did not just begin with Sir John Evans in the latter half of the 19th century, but can be moved back down into the 16th century at least!'

We will probably never come across a coin with such an exceptional provenance, but as collectors we owe it to those who will come after us to obtain and preserve as much information about our coins as we can.

We should all keep a detailed record of where and when we acquired our coins, along with any available information about their previous ownership.

Thanks to Dr Alan Walker for permission to quote extracts from his newsletter.

References

Walker Dr A., 2017. *Provenances or the Collector as a Temporary Owner*, News from Nomos, April 2017 (<https://nomosag.com/>).

Noble Numismatics, 2007. *Catalogue, Sale 84, 28-30 March 2007*.

BANKSY'S £10 NOTES

John Melville-Jones

Banksy (as he is known) is a very successful graffiti artist who lives in Bristol, England. In August 2004 he used his skills to produce a number of spoof £10 notes which he gave away, sometimes in large bundles.

He could not be prosecuted for this, because he did not sell them (although they are now worth at least £200 if in good condition), because anyone who looked at them would realize that they were not genuine.

For example, on the back of the genuine notes, the name and dates of birth and death appeared below the portrait of Charles Darwin, but on Banksy's note (see below) a different legend can be seen.



On the front of the notes (see below), the portrait of Princess Diana that replaces the Queen's portrait is so recognizable that it could hardly be expected that any normal person would fail to realize that the note was not genuine. Diana had then been dead for several years, so it could be suggested that this was not in good taste, although it might have been meant as a tribute to her.

In August 2015 Banksy unveiled a show called 'Dismaland' at Weston-super-Mare in England in which one of the items was a carriage like Cinderella's which had overturned and was being photographed by a crowd of *parapazzi* wearing motor cycle helmets.



In addition to the portrait of Diana, the spoof note contained the legend 'Banksy of England', and below this was written the usual promise, with a slight adjustment, 'I PROMISE TO PAY THE BEARER THE ULTIMATE PRICE'.

In addition, as Sandra Vowles pointed out to me when I showed pictures of this note at one of our meetings, the numbers on the left hand side of the note did not reproduce exactly the numbers on the right hand side, because after the CA at the beginning there was a gap instead of a 7, and before the final 70 there was another gap. After thinking about this, I decided that Banksy must have been aware that if a part of a currency note was brought to a bank, it might have been possible to receive a replacement note. Obviously, if the part with the portrait of Diana had been handed in, the bank would not have paid out, but the left hand part of the note might have passed muster with a careless teller.

Alternatively, the person who presented it might have found himself in the hands of the police. So by making the note even less believable, Banksy protected himself and others.

Again, at one of our meetings, someone else spoke about a spoof 22 dollar bill produced by an American comedian who had run for president since 2004 (thus perhaps putting the idea into someone else’s head in 2016). The performer had legally changed his name earlier to Love 22. He was brought before a judge in New Orleans on a charge of counterfeiting (and unlike Banksy, he had actually been selling them at five for a dollar), but the judge agreed that no person could reasonably be expected to believe that these notes were genuine, particularly since the portrait on the front was of Love 22 himself, so he was let off (score 22 - love, as he said)..



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# PERTH MONEY EXPO 2018

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018



*General View, Main Room*



*General View, Main Room*



*Five Cent Forage*



*Foreign Coin Forage*

## CALENDAR OF PNS MEETINGS FOR 2018

PNS meetings are held at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of each month, except December, at The Collins Street Centre, corner of Collins Street and Shaftsbury Street, South Perth.

Meeting dates for 2018 are as follows:

|              |                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 31   | Short talks, tender sale.                                                                                                                                       |
| February 28  | Invited speaker, no-reserve tender sale.                                                                                                                        |
| March 28     | Tender sale.                                                                                                                                                    |
| April 25     | Invited speaker, no-reserve tender sale.                                                                                                                        |
| May 30       | Short talks, tender sale.                                                                                                                                       |
| June 27      | Quiz, no-reserve tender sale.                                                                                                                                   |
| July 25      | Annual General Meeting, tender sale.                                                                                                                            |
| August 29    | No-reserve tender sale.                                                                                                                                         |
| September 26 | Invited speaker (John Wheatley, <i>The Early History of the Bank of New South Wales including the opening of the first two branches in W.A.</i> ), tender Sale. |
| October 31   | No-reserve tender sale.                                                                                                                                         |
| November 28  | Tender sale.                                                                                                                                                    |

More details of invited speakers and other matters will be provided as they become available.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Adult                      | \$15  |
| Pensioner                  | \$10  |
| WA Country                 | \$10  |
| Associate                  | \$7   |
| Junior                     | \$7   |
| Nomination Fee             | \$5   |
| Fully Paid Life Membership | \$250 |

Subscriptions at the above rates are due and payable in advance on 1<sup>st</sup> March each year and shall be paid within three months after which time the membership will lapse.

## CALENDAR OF FAIRS

Perth Numismatic Society Coin, Medal and Banknote Fairs:

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Peel Region Numismatic Group / Mandurah Philatelic Society Fair:

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November

Perth Stamp & Coin Show:

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> – Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019

Phoenix Auctions:

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November

Cannington Antique and Collectors Fair:

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Antique and Collectors Fairs:

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018 (Claremont)

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018 (Claremont)

Militaria Swapmeet (Cannington):

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Annual Militaria Fair (Cannington):

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018

For more details see: <http://www.pns.org.au/events/>

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