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Your Newsletter April 2007

Your Newsletter is an electronic publication of the American Numismatic Association dedicated to serving Young Numismatists by publishing their articles and related items of numismatic interest. To subscribe to the free *Your Newsletter*, email YourNewsletter@money.org and ask to be placed on the list. Permission to copy, distribute, and publish any information in *Your Newsletter* is granted to all.

Editor: Max B. Spiegel

Thank you to our contributors and readers! If you have an interesting numismatic article, website, or other item of interest that you would like published in *Your Newsletter*, email YourNewsletter@money.org.

Editor's Notes

With this issue it has been a full year since *Your Newsletter* was restarted after a six month break. It's been a great year with many interesting articles and an increase in the number of people subscribing to *YN*. Some Young Numismatists had their first articles published this past year, and others published entire series of articles. Although the number of articles per issue has been rather slim, they have been quality, and it's always a pleasure reading them. It was an honor being selected as the volunteer Editor for *Your Newsletter* a year ago, and I have had a great time putting together each issue.

There has been a lot of talk about the new Presidential Dollar coins, especially with the recently discovered error with the missing edge inscription. At the Baltimore Coin and Currency Convention this past weekend I had a chance to look at a few of them. Personally I think the dollar coins look more like casino tokens, but they'll probably help attract more people to the hobby. On this note, I chose an article from *Money Talks* that came out while there were still talks to put out the Sacagawea Dollar. Dollar coins may never take off in the United States, but they are still nice to have around.

The Coins of the David R. Cervin Ancient Coin Project

Part 8 of 8: Tetradrachm of Antiochus VII

By Sam H. Spiegel

The ANA David R. Cervin Ancient Coin Project is a project open to all young numismatists who are members of the American Numismatic Association (ANA). The coins are earned a number of different ways, such as giving numismatic related talks, publishing articles, completing an ANA correspondence course, or a course at the Summer Seminar. There are a total of 8 coins available in the project. However, to earn the eighth, one must exhibit the first seven coins. The coins in the project are a great addition to any collection, representing civilizations as far-reaching as Gaul (modern-day France) all the way to the Mauryan Empire (India). They also range in time periods from the fourth century BC to the third century AD. That's 700 years of history! So, if you are a beginner, and looking at an ancient coin for the first time, or are a veteran collector, this is a great project that will add many memorable coins to your collection. In this series of articles, I have been showcasing the series of coins that I have received (and you can too). This month is the eighth and final coin in the series; a silver tetradrachm of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus VII.



The Empire of Alexander the Great, 323 BC

(Photo: University of Texas Libraries,

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/shepherd/macedonian_empire_336_323.jp)

The year 336 BC is one of the most important years in the history of Western Civilization. It was the year that Philip II of Macedon was assassinated and his son Alexander III ascended to the throne. His son, better known as Alexander the Great, was ruler over a newly conquered and unified Greece, and set his sights on seeking revenge for the attacks suffered by Greece at the hands of the Persians a hundred and fifty years before. For the next thirteen years, Alexander extended his empire, reaching from Greece, past Persia, all of the way to the Hindu Kush Mountains in India. Though Alexander wished to push on, his battle-weary soldiers refused to do

so. In 323 BC, he died of unknown causes in Babylon on his way back to Greece. On his deathbed, when asked who would rule his empire, some romantic scholars believe he said *kratisto*; "to the strongest." This led to the *diadochi* taking over his empire. The diadochi are the successors of Alexander, who were his highest ranking officers. They divided up his vast empire among themselves, each taking a different region. One of the most successful of these was Seleucus, who claimed Babylon and the remnants of the Persian Empire to the east of it.

Soon after the death of Alexander, the diadochi began fighting among themselves and whatever unity there may have been before, was lost. This would be a recurring theme in this region for the next several hundred years, until the Romans came and conquered it all. When Seleucus died in 280 BC, his son Antiochus came to the throne. With the Seleucid Empire having the largest geographic area out of any of the others, Antiochus had a tough time keeping it unified, especially since it was around this time that the Gauls came in through Asia Minor and began ravaging the land. Through constant campaigning, Antiochus was able to keep the empire intact. His coins were very similar to the old Alexandrian type, with a bust on the obverse, and then a figure on the reverse surrounded by inscriptions. However, he placed his own name on the coins, so the inscriptions on the reverse would usually read "ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ," or "Of King Antiochus."



This coin is a coin from Antiochus VII (nicknamed Sidetes from the city of Sidon), a descendant of Seleucus. He was the younger brother of Demetrius II, who had overthrown the Seleucid ruler Alexander Balas in 145 BC with help from Ptolemy of Egypt, (who was the descendant of the same Ptolemy who was one of the officers of Alexander who had claimed Egypt for himself when Alexander's empire was divided after his death). Demetrius ruled only the western half of the Seleucid Empire because the eastern half had been over-run by the Parthians. While combating them, he was captured and held hostage in 140 BC, and after a power struggle, was succeeded by Antiochus VII in 138 BC. Antiochus VII was a rather good ruler compared to the others of the late Seleucid Empire. He was able to produce a large number of coins. An interesting thing about the tetradrachms produced by the Seleucids arises out of the fact they controlled the trading cities in Phoenicia. Since trade was so important, they produced two kinds of tetradrachms, one under the Attic weight standard and one under the Phoenician weight standard. Since there was no unified ruler of the eastern Mediterranean, but trade was still important, they had to produce different coins of different weights so they would be accepted all over. The ones under the Attic weight standard (such as this one) depict Athena on the reverse. The ones in the Phoenician weight standard depict an eagle on the reverse instead (much like the eagle shown on many of the coins of the Ptolemies), and weighs a couple of grams less than the ones under the Attic weight standard.

On this coin, in the outstretched hand of Athena, is the goddess Nike, goddess of victory (that is where the sportswear company Nike gets its name).

To earn this coin, you have only one option, of exhibiting the previous seven coins at a numismatic-related event (such as a coin show). This is the final step in the project. While the request form says you will receive a different coin than the one described above (a stater from Pamphylia), I received this coin instead. Perhaps when you complete the project, you could write about the coin you get! Once you have completed this project, you can move on and do the Early American Copper Coin Project, which is very similar to this one. Good luck and happy collecting.

Money Talks was a radio project began by the American Numismatic Association in October 1992 as a series of daily national radio programs. In 1996 the stories from Money Talks' first year were collected in a book published by the ANA. The following is a broadcast excerpted from the book, "Money Talks."

Needed: A \$1 Coin

By Jim Benfield

The U.S. government could save nearly a billion dollars a year – if Americans would just carry a \$1 coin instead of a \$1 bill.

This is "ANA's Money Talks."

How could we save so much money? Easy...a coin lasts more than 30 years, while paper dollar bills must be reprinted every 18 months. The Treasury Department estimates the cotton and flax \$1 bill only lasts for about 400 transactions.

More money could be saved by mass transit agencies if we had a \$1 coin. Each year, bus and subway agencies spend \$125 million just to straighten out and count dollar bills. Coins can be counted for a fraction of the cost, because this tedious task can be done by machines instead of by human hands.



Golden Dollar Obverse, © 1999 U.S. Mint, All Rights Reserved

The Sacagawea Dollar (Photo: U.S. Mint)

Vending machines that accept dollar bills cost more to manufacture – about \$400-\$500 more. Those increased costs must be passed on to the customers. So, the old dollar bill indirectly raises the costs of candy, soft drinks or anything sold from a vending machine.

Since 1980 Japan, England, Canada and most European countries have replaced their low-value bills with new, high-value coins.

Many people are afraid dollar coins would cause their pockets to sag. But fans of the dollar bills are pulled from circulation, the rarely used \$2 bill will become popular. And those who use coin laundries, long-term parking meters, and pay telephones won't have to carry around a roll of quarters.

A coalition of vendors, mass-transit agencies and balanced advocates are urging Congress to introduce a new \$1 coin. The coin they propose would be gold-colored and have a smooth edge – like a nickel.

So, if we ever get that golden dollar coin, you'll know the reason why!

Young Numismatists Programs

The ANA has many programs to encourage Young Numismatists to be active in the hobby. The 2007 ANA Summer Seminar will be held in two sessions during the last week of June and the first week of July. Summer Seminar is an opportunity for numismatic scholarship and camaraderie, offering students a wide and varied selection of week-long courses suited for anyone, from the curious beginner to the most advanced numismatist. Young Numismatists (YNs), ages 13 to 22, stay in a Colorado College dormitory with experienced chaperones and mentors. For more information about the Seminar, go to the ANA website (www.money.org). Click on Summer Seminar under the "Numismatic Events" drop-down menu.

Two great ways for Young Numismatists to learn and earn spectacular coins and other prizes are the *David R. Cervin Ancient Coin Project* and the *Early American Copper Coin Project* (select "Young Numismatists" from the "Explore the World of Money" drop-down menu on the ANA website).

By completing hobby-related activities YNs can also earn auction dollars to spend at the YN Auction and Mail-bid Auction held in conjunction with the ANA World's Fair of Money™ each year. To learn how to earn these auction dollars, there is a form located on the Young Numismatists page of the ANA website.

If any other clubs have programs or events for Young Numismatists, please send the information to YourNewsletter@money.org.

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