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## Your Newsletter November 2006

*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](mailto: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](mailto:YourNewsletter@money.org). *Authors of published articles earn YN dollars that can be used to purchase numismatic items in the YN Floor-Bid and Mail-Bid Auctions conducted annually in conjunction with the American Numismatic Association World's Fair of Money.*<sup>™</sup>

### Editor's Notes

It's getting colder, which means only one thing: winter is just around the corner. Days like today, however, when the temperature dips into the mid-40s, make me wonder how it's possible winter is still two months away. Winter usually means bundling up when you go outside, and trying to spend as much time as possible inside where it's warm. (Unless, of course, you are one of the lucky people who lives somewhere down south.) The numismatic connection for that digression is that although I don't particularly like the cold, I have always said that winter is my favorite time for going to coin shows. Not only is being inside at a coin show a welcome reprieve from the cold outside, but also some of the biggest coin shows occur in the winter.

In just a few weeks there will be the Baltimore Coin and Currency Convention; only a few miles away from where I am currently living. Just a week later is the Santa Clara Coin, Stamp & Collectibles Expo. This is followed by a host of other local and regional shows, leading up to what's billed as "the largest coin show in America:" the Florida United Numismatists (FUN) Convention in early January. A week after that is one of my favorite shows: the New York International Numismatic Convention. Held in the ritzy Waldorf-Astoria in New York City, the show features dealers from all around the world showcasing some of the most interesting foreign coins, paper money and medals imaginable. Before the weather finally starts getting warmer, there is the Long Beach Coin, Stamp, & Collectibles Expo in February and of course, the American Numismatic Association National Money Show<sup>®</sup> in Charlotte, North Carolina

March 16- 18<sup>th</sup>. Although there are coin shows all year, some of the best occur during the winter. I suppose what I'm trying to say is: take a break from the cold and go inside to check out some of the great coin shows happening during the winter. I can guarantee it'll be a lot more fun in there than outside. *For a full listing of coin shows and numismatic conventions by date and region, please see the "Schedule of Events" published monthly in "Numismatist."*

## Announcements

### **ANA Will Use Website to Get Member Feedback**

The ANA has announced that members can now use the ANA website to provide direct input to the board of governors on important policy issues. Effective October 6, members can go to [www.money.org](http://www.money.org), click on the member feedback link under "News and Events," and go directly to a page that features the full recommendations of the Exhibits Committee. Members can then fill out a feedback form and send it directly to the Board of Governors and the ANA Executive Office.

### Metal Detecting: The Free Way to Collect Coins

By Jake Rieb, J-3120541

I am a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who spends most of his free time collecting United States coins. I am a junior member of the ANA and am in the process of organizing a student coin collecting club on campus. I have been collecting coins passively since I was about 12 years old and seriously for the last three years. I began collecting with the classic Lincoln wheat cent folder and eventually moved on to uncirculated Jefferson nickels. Last year I finally purchased the final coin for my set, the key 1939-D. I learned one thing from completing that set: even collecting a modern series like Jefferson nickels can be expensive for a student!

About that same time I became interested in metal detecting. My thoughts were that beyond the initial cost of the metal detector, any coins found with it would be free. I purchased a White's Prizm V and began to detect around campus. It wasn't very long before I found my first coin: a modern Lincoln memorial cent. It wasn't a spectacular find by any means but it did assure me that the metal detector worked and I felt I was on my way to finding coins worthy of adding to my collection! I soon found another cent and then another, as well as other assorted modern coins. I went home that first day with about \$5.00 worth of change and a determination to find something collectible.



Metal detecting can be a fun activity for people of any age.  
(Photos: White's of California)

My next few metal detecting expeditions were much more exciting and I soon found my very first silver coin. It was a 1911, Liberty-head dime that I determined was in Good condition by the guidelines in my *ANA Grading Standards* book. That find is probably my most memorable because it was the first coin that was collection-worthy. And, just as exciting, the dime was free! Some student probably dropped it from their pocket 70+ years ago and there it stayed until I pulled it out of the ground! Amazingly, silver doesn't seem to tarnish in the soil and the coin looks just as good today as it did the day it was dropped.

Soon after finding the dime, I found my first love token in an overgrown part of the campus under a large tree. The token is made from an 1888 Seated Liberty quarter and the reverse has the initials SA and LLR engraved in it. At first I was disappointed that the quarter was damaged but I soon began to appreciate the history the coin represents. The craftsmanship required to create something that intricate to show love to someone is amazing. It is a fascinating piece from a by-gone era.

Since then I have found numerous Lincoln Wheat cents, old dorm keys, a Bucky Badger pin, a silver ring and an 1837 Montreal half-penny bank token. Every coin I find metal detecting is a wonderful glimpse into the past and my pocket book finds it agreeable as well! On, Wisconsin!

## The Coins of the David R. Cervin Ancient Coin Project

### Part 3 of 8: Coin of the Mauryan Empire

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 eight 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 will showcase the coins

that I have received (and you can too). This week is the third coin in the series; an interesting square silver coin from the Mauryan Empire in India.



The Mauryan Empire at its height.  
(Photo: [www.allempires.com](http://www.allempires.com))

The Mauryan Empire was perhaps the most powerful empire of ancient India. It was founded in 324 BC by Chandragupta Maurya, who was originally from the Magadha Kingdom, another powerful kingdom in eastern India. The Magadha were asked to join in a coalition

against the threatening forces of Alexander the Great. However, just the thought of a proposed war with the mighty Magadha contributed to the exhausted Macedonian troops' decision to return home. The details of Chandragupta's rise to power are somewhat hazy, but the end result was that he became ruler of Magadha, and instituted an advanced system of government, with regulated tax, trade and commerce, maintenance of public spaces, a large standing army, and many officials who were in charge of localized areas. Chandragupta also expanded his empire, reclaiming some of the lands that Alexander the Great had conquered. This expanded empire became known as the Mauryan Empire.

Chandragupta may have been a great ruler, but his grandson, Ashoka the Great, is praised as one of the best leaders in India's entire history. He ascended to the throne in 269 BC. His most famous feat was the annexation of Kalinga. Reportedly, it was a fierce war, with an estimated 100,000 soldiers and civilians being killed, with many more being negatively affected by the repercussions of the war. Seeing this devastation, Ashoka began feeling remorseful and regretful. He decided to embrace the teachings of Buddha and renounced violence and war. This was an amazing transformation in a time when war was considered a part of any ruler's reign. He made his laws very strict, but there was peace. Arts flourished under his rule, until his death in 232 BC. The empire would last for about another 50 successful years, until the commander-in-chief assassinated Brhadrata (the king at that time) and established the Sunga dynasty.



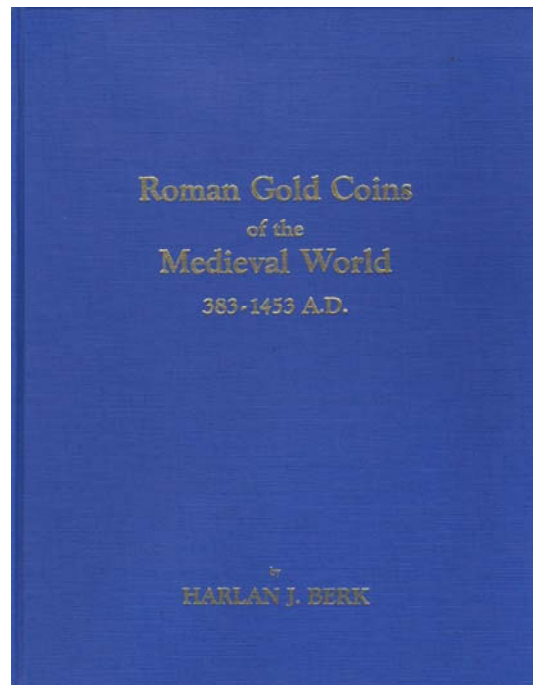
Chandragupta's mentor Chanakya wrote a very famous treatise called *Arthashastra*. It is comparable to Machiavelli's *The Prince*. In it, he set forth the denominations and weight standards for the monetary system. All of the coins were rectangular with five punch marks. Interestingly, while many of the meanings of the symbols from the punch marks are unknown, each coin always included a sun symbol (it can be seen on this coin in the corner that is clipped off). Other symbols include trees, branches, animals, religious deities, and geometric shapes. Not much more numismatic research has been done in this field, though there is definitely a lot more to be learned.

This coin can be earned by any YN by repeating any three of the following categories:

- Speak on any numismatic subject to any group, such as at school, coin club, Boy/Girl scouts, etc.
- Exhibit at any coin show, bank, library, etc.
- Publish an article (400 words or more).
- Hold an office in any ANA member organization such as a local coin club, or the Young Numismatists of America (YNA).
- Volunteer to work at a local coin show.
- Earn a badge, award, or other recognition for numismatics.

Once you have completed the three categories, print and fill out the request form found on the "Young Numismatists" page of the ANA website, under the "Explore the World of Money" drop-down menu.

A YN can earn something else at this stage in the process. All you have to do is complete any remaining category that you didn't do to earn your first or second coin. If you do this, you can send away for a great book on ancient Greek and/or Roman coins. When I did this, I received a book by Harlan J. Berk called *Roman Gold Coins of the Medieval World*. This is a great book on gold coins since the Byzantine Empire.



**Next time:** *Antoninianus of Probus from the Roman Empire*

## ANA's Money Talks

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."

### **The Widow's Mite**

By Gerald Tebben

Do you remember the Bible story in which Jesus praised the temple offering of a "certain poor widow"? While rich men gave vast sums, she gave a greater gift – two tiny coins that were all the money she owned.

This is "ANA's Money Talks."

Today we'll tell you about the coin the Biblical writers call "the widow's mite."

In ancient Israel, centuries-old coins of Jewish kings circulated alongside the newly minted coins of Roman rulers. Translators for the King James Bible used the English word mite for the small coins the widow offered. At the time of the translation, the word mite was commonly used for any coin of very small value.

Mark's account, written in Greek, told of the widow offering two lepta – the smallest Greek coin in circulation in Jesus's time. But the smallest coin circulating in first-century Judea was the pruta, an insignificant little coin about half the size of our modern penny. Scholars think that the tiny pruta was the widow's mite referred to by Jesus. But since there were several different kinds in circulation during the time of Christ, nobody knows for sure which pruta was the widow's mite.



A bronze pruta of the Jewish High Priest  
Alexander Jannaeus, 103-76 BC.

(Photo: Katrina Shillam,  
[romanorum.com.au](http://romanorum.com.au))

Tiny bronze coins issued in the name of the Jewish Maccabaeen kings were favorite temple offerings. These coins were originally produced 100 to 200 years before Jesus began his public preaching. Typically, they have an anchor on one side and a star on the other, and can be bought today for only a few dollars.

Other small coins were issued by Herod Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, and the Roman governors Valerius Gratus and Pontius Pilate. Perhaps one of these may have been the tiny coin Jesus used to teach a lesson about love and sacrifice.

## Young Numismatists Programs

The ANA has many programs to encourage Young Numismatists (YNs) to be active in the hobby. Next year's 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, the numismatic highlight of the year, go to the ANA website ([www.money.org](http://www.money.org)). Summer Seminar Young Numismatist Scholarship applications will be posted on the website November 15<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for receipt of all application materials will be February 15, 2007.

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" pull-down menu on the ANA website). By completing hobby-related activities YNs can also earn auction dollars to spend at the ANA World's Fair of Money convention each year. To see 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](mailto:YourNewsletter@money.org).

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