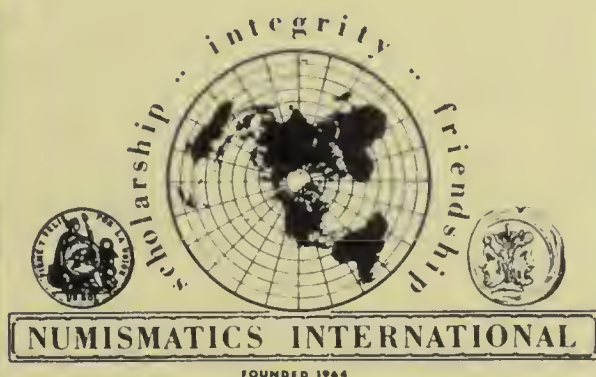


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURES

ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS: The Kipper and Wipper Time in Germany and How Mecklenburg and Pomerania Dealt With It, by Paul F. L. de Groot ----- 245
The Anse Canot Tokens, by Edward Roehrs ----- 265
Catalog Revisions, by John S. Davenport ----- 259
Digressions on a Theme of the Crucifixion: Part II, by Bob Forrest ----- 254
Early Hawaiian Currency, by Otto Janssen ----- 268
Jesus of Medinaceli, by Bob Forrest ----- 270

DEPARTMENTS

Book News & Reviews ----- 272
From the Mailbox ----- 244

INSIDE N.I.

Librarian's Report ----- 243
Membership Chairman's Report ----- 243

OTHER ITEMS

The Greatest Coin Collector of All Time? ----- 244
London 20-Franc Pieces of 1815, by John Demarias ----- 267



## ABOUT THOSE COUNTERSTAMPS - THE KIPPER AND WIPPER TIME IN GERMANY AND HOW MECKLENBURG AND POMERANIA DEALT WITH IT.

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The Kipper and Wipper time in Germany, which lasted from 1618-23, was a period of very high inflation and a serious disruption of monetary stability. It can only be understood when one realizes that at the time the intrinsic value of a coin, that is the amount of fine silver (or gold) contained in it, was an all-important factor. Fiduciary or token money was not widely accepted.

The German empire was too large and heterogenous to be effectively administered as a unit. For that reason it had been subdivided in Kreise or Circles. These basically grouped the states of one region together for the management of matters of common concern, one of these being monetary affairs. Each had a sort of supervisory board to ensure good coinage. It issued regulations about the specifications of the allowed coins, and checked the quality of the produced pieces. This was no simple task, because currency did not stay within the boundaries of the issuing states. Any lower quality coins intruding in a region would exert pressure on the local issuers to also lower their own standards in order to be able to compete. This all the more because many authorities viewed their mints mainly as a source of revenue. Most mints were rented out to private entrepreneurs who had to pay a high seigniorage, but were compensated by lax control of the regulations. Some Circles, like the Rhenish-Westphalian, were more tightly organised than others. These were better able to act against monetary mismanagement. But even they could not prevent all abuses, especially in times of political turmoil and war.

The German coinage agreement of 1566 introduced a taler of standard weight and fineness for the whole Empire, the Reichstaler. Because this piece was used for large transactions and in international trade, nobody tampered with it in any serious way. But its value was expressed in small denominations, kreuzers in the South, various types and standards of groschen and schillings in the North. These small coin species were the workhorses of everyday commerce. Prices were expressed in them rather than in talers. And it was this "current money" that was steadily, but at first slowly, being debased. In order to attract bullion to a mint, its exploiter had to offer more in current money for it than the competition. The only way to do that was to slightly lower the standard of the coins that were struck. As a result prices for goods, as well as the valuations of the "coarse" coins, the reichstalers and their halves, and of older coins of higher silver content, all expressed in current money, rose. A feature of this development is also that at times when a coin remained for a while in a fairly stable relation to the current coins, its name became a reckoning unit. Gulden became the name for 60 kreuzers, (courant) taler for 32 (wendish) schillings, just like in the British world a guinea represented the amount of 21 shillings. This made it necessary to distinguish the real taler as reichs- or species-taler.

After 1600, and especially after 1610, the pace of debasement of the "current coins" started to accelerate. Tensions between Catholic and Protestant states, and between the Princes and the Emperor were increasing. Everybody started to prepare for war, and there were already hostilities, like the war of succession for the Julich-Cleve-Berg inheritance, which started in 1609. The authorities needed more and more money. They could not touch the coarse money, which was necessary for the purchase of

arms and provisions for war as well as the hiring of troops. So the short term solution was to increase the amount of circulating coin. And the only way to do that was by adulterating the small values. For instance duke Friedrich Ulrich of Brunswick Luneburg in 1617 raised the amount of groschen from around 120 per fine mark to 210! When important princes commenced doing this, it got the greedy attention of many smaller counts and lords with no or doubtful mintrights. More and more mints appeared. The supervisory mechanism essentially broke down in many of the Circles.

After the election of count palatine Frederick V as king of Bohemia, the first phase of the Thirty Years War started in May 1618. Immediately inflation began to accelerate. This happened both in real terms and in the valuation of the taler expressed in current money. The reichstaler, which since 1616 in southern Germany had been valued at 90 kruezer, rose in Nuremberg to 92 in May 1618, 124 in December 1619, around 150 in March 1621, 186 in June 1621, 270 in September 1621, 390 in December 1621, to reach its highest "value" of 600 kreuzer in February and March 1622. Not all parts of Germany suffered equally. While in Hamburg and Lubeck the reichstaler rose to 54 schillings, Cologne knew very little inflation. This inflation was both the result of, and the cause for, increasing debasement of the current money. In several regions even copper coins, then not generally in use in Germany, were introduced for small change. Even mighty princes with silver mines took part in this shady business. They included the elector of Saxony, who introduced special denominations for this purpose, and the dukes of Brunswick, who set up many illegal and secret mints in their territories. It was no wonder that many cities and lordlings joined in with great zest to exploit this opportunity. The lowering of coinage standards was rarely publicised and many coins were issued by authorities

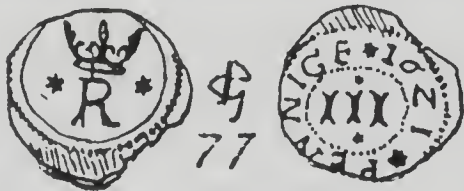


Fig. 1

that are not or hard to track. The pictured copper 3 pfennig piece (Fig. 1) has had many identifications, from Reinstein to Rietberg. In addition, many were undated, which makes it harder to place them in the right part of the sequence.

Whoever could, hung on to the good old silver and gold coins. The kipper and wipper were the people who cherry-picked the heavier coins or those of relatively better alloy in order to have them minted into inferior coins with the same denomination. This became a self-perpetuating cycle. Not everybody was willing to participate in this venal game. At the end of 1619 the mintmaster in Saalfeld, Wolf Albrecht, refused to strike kipper coins. He was promptly fired for insubordination!

Notwithstanding all pressure from the profiting authorities, slowly a revolt brewed and people began to refuse the worthless money. When finally the income from taxes, tolls, etc. suffered, even the offending princes realised that they had to take measures against the bad money. In some regions this happened in 1622, elsewhere not until 1623. In many cases the inflation coins were retariffed to better reflect their true value, and later recalled. In southern Germany the reichstaler returned, for a while at least, to 90 kreuzer, in the north to 24 gute (good) groschen, 36 mariengroschen or 48 Lubeck schillings. After this period of coin debasement many silver coins have the inscription NACH DEM ALTEN SCHROT UND KORN, meaning that they were made in accordance with the good old standards of weight and fineness. Because so

many inflationary coins were remelted, silver for a short time became cheaper, and new coins of all sizes were struck. But soon its price began to rise again. More profit could be made from minting the smaller pieces than from the larger, and these (Reichstalers and the like) were only struck as long as they were needed for war payments. An exception was formed by those princes who had their own silver mines and hence depended less on the international marketplace.

A very large number of inflationary coins and, in particular for the Kipper and Wipper period, special coin types exists for the first quarter of the 17th century. The related counterstamps are mainly tied to efforts at undoing the damage. In some regions attempts to stem the deterioration of the currency started already before the Kipper and Wipper period.

# Abdruck etlicher Doppelschilling v. in der Valuation Befur

Doppelschilling.

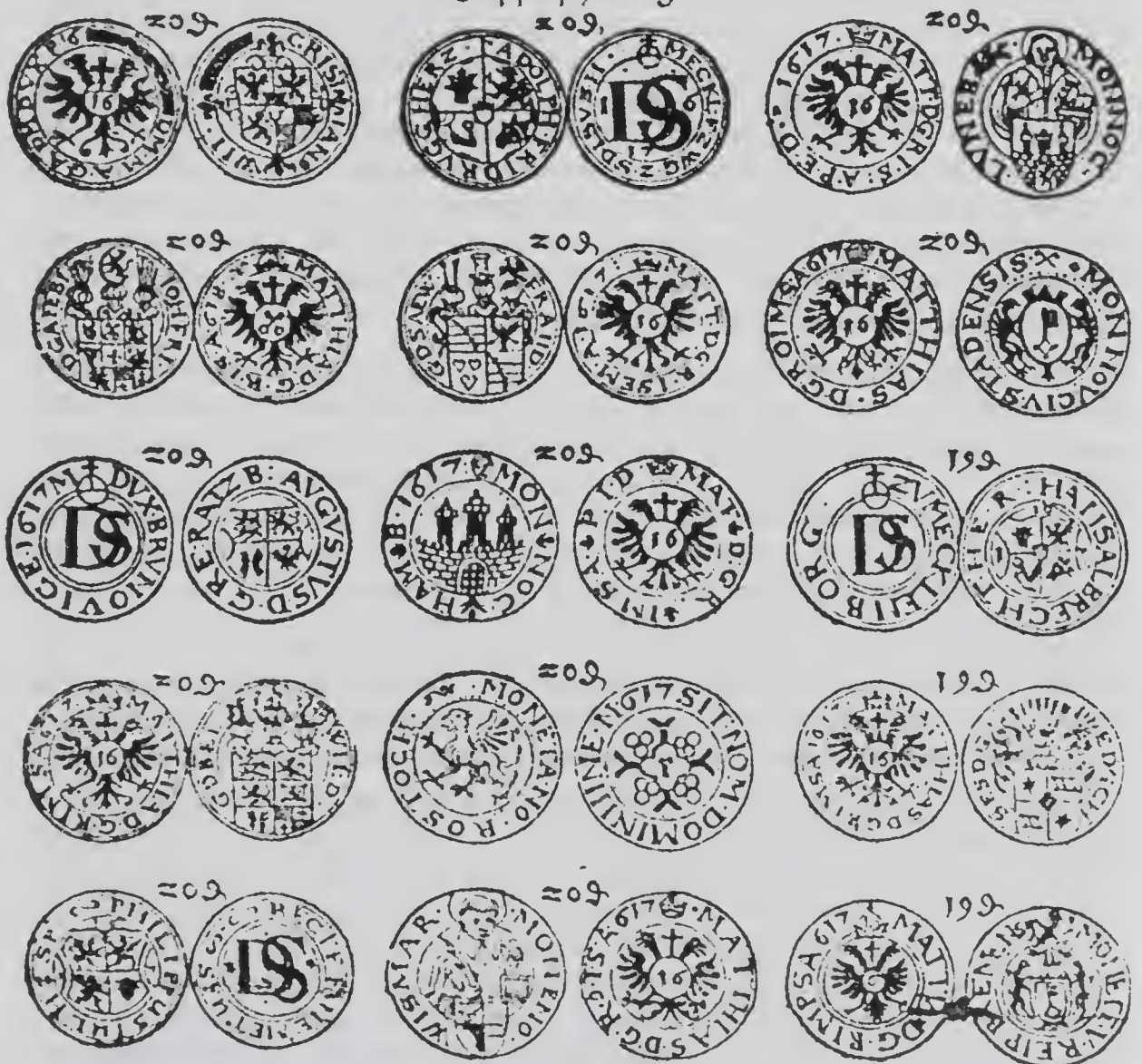


Fig. 2

Doppelschillings as pictured in a Lower Saxony "Valuation" (Evaluation) of 1619.

It is instructive to see how differently even adjacent states went about the problem of revaluating debased currency. As luck has it, fairly much is known about the situation of two states on the Baltic coast, Pomerania (Pommern) and Mecklenburg.



BR - Brunswick	R - Rostock
D - Denmark	S - Stralsund
FR - Friesland	W - Wismar

In both states the most important coin for commerce was the doppelschilling (double schilling) Lubeck currency, as it was in much of the coastal areas of Lower Saxony (Fig. 2). Since 1592 its value had been set at 1/16 reichstaler (Rtlr), so one schilling of the Lubeck standard was tariffed at 1/32 Rtlr. The coin was struck by several states in two distinctive types. The first carried on the obverse the arms of the issuing prince or city, while the reverse showed the imperial eagle with the value 16 inscribed on the orb on its chest. The second showed on the obverse the arms of the minting authority, and on the reverse the intertwined letters DS. Coins of both types circulated in the entire region. East of the Elbe river, in Mecklenburg and Pomerania the second type was more popular than the first.

In the beginning of the 17th century a steadily increasing debasement of this denomination set in. That made it attractive even for minting authorities in the adjacent areas where groschen were used instead of schillings, to mint double schillings for export. Because most went to Mecklenburg and Pomerania, the coins minted in these outside territories were mainly of the DS type. Soon the trickle of double schillings of too low fineness turned into a flood. The result was the steady decline in value of this coin as a fraction of the reichstaler.

Even before the culmination of this deterioration, several attempts were made in the Lower Saxonian Circle to stop or even reverse it. In practice these went not much further than to document at various times how far the debasement had progressed. Already in 1616 duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg proposed to mark the double schillings of full official value. In early 1619 Hamburg and Lubeck actually carried out this measure, without results. In June 1619 the duke and the two cities proposed to counterstamp those double schillings that were worth at least 1/20 Rtlr with an intertwined DS. Again little or nothing came of this. Finally, in April 1620, the Hanseatic cities of Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck made an agreement with the two dukes of Mecklenburg to counterstamp those double schillings worth at least 1/24 Rtlr. The cities were to use their symbols, tower, key and eagle respectively (deMey 84,-,117) (Fig. 3), the dukes presumably the bullshead, the arms of Mecklenburg. An issue of new coins of this standard was also foreseen. While this marking was



84



117

Fig. 3

done in quantity in Hamburg and Bremen, coins with the corresponding counterstamps of Lubeck are rare. Those of Mecklenburg may be non-existent, even though the agreement was proclaimed in June 1620. The Mecklenburg double schillings of around 1525 marked with a

bullshead (deMey 128) belong to an earlier episode of currency turmoil. From this point on the developments in Mecklenburg and Pommern-Wolgast will be followed separately.

MECKLENBURG was a duchy that at the time had been divided, not very evenly, between two brothers. Adolf Friedrich I of Schwerin (1592-1658) got the larger part, his younger brother, Hans Albrecht II ruled over the Güstrow inheritance from 1610-1636. The brothers governed jointly until March 1621. Even after the state was formally divided the rulers continued to cooperate closely in monetary matters, so that for practical purposes Mecklenburg was run as one state. Joined like that, their duchy was compact, with only the secular bishopric of Schwerin as an annoying enclave. There were many small towns, which were used by the dukes as a counterbalance against the nobility. Two larger ones were powerful cities in their own right, Rostock and Wismar. These tended to defend their autonomy, including their rights of coinage, against their overlord, often with some success.

In March 1621 the dukes issued an order forbidding all currency of low alloy. They promised to mint large and small silver coins of good quality and fineness, as well as copper pieces of one and two pfennig for the small trade. Neither the minting of new coins, except of copper three pfennig pieces for each duchy, nor the removal of the base coinage got very far. Wismar and Rostock too minted three pfennig pieces (witten) at a good profit.

Finally a conference of all parties took place. It led to the "Renovierte Muenzordnung" (Renewed Currency Regulation) of 20 October 1621. This stipulated that double schillings of the right weight and fineness were allowed by weight at a rate that roughly corresponded to 30 pieces to a Reichstaler. They were to be counterstamped, after which unmarked coins would be demonetized. Use of single double schilling coins, even of good weight and alloy, for trade was prohibited. Copper coins had to be accepted only to the value of 12 schillings. They could also be exchanged in all municipalities free of charge in amounts of one gulden or more.

The organisation was excellent. The compact territory was covered with a network of some 32 sites out of a total of 44 towns. The stamp was to consist of a die with the ducal bullshead combined with for each town one with assigned letters.

Counterstamps have not yet been found for all places that are mentioned in the acts, and hoards have yielded marks for towns that were not named in them. Wismar and Rostock deviated from the pattern as will be seen. The following list mentions: NAME, assigned letters from the acts, (found marks):

BOIZENBURG, -, (B); BRUEL, BR, (-); (Neu)BUKOW, BV, (BV); CRIVITZ, K, (K); DASSOW, DA, (-); DOEMITZ, D, (D); FRIEDLAND, -, (F, deMey 68); FUERSTENBERG, FV, (-); GADEBUSCH, GA, (GA, deMey 70); GNOIEN, -, (GN, deMey 71); GOLDBERG, GO, (GO); GRABOW, GR, (GR); GREVESMUEHLEN,

GM, (GM); GÜSTROW, -, (G, deMey 79); KROEPELIN, KR, (KR); LUEBZ, LZ, (LZ); MALCHOW, M, (M, deMey 123); NEUBRANDENBURG, NB, (NB); NEUSTADT, NS, (NS); PARCHIM, PA, (PA, deMey 161); PLAU, -, (PL,P, deMey 165,166); REHNA, RE, (RE); RIBNITZ, RI, (RI); ROEBEL, RO, (RO); ROSTOCK, R, (see below); SCHWERIN, SW, (SW); STARGARD, -, (SG); STERNBERG, ST, (ST); STRELITZ, SR, (SR); WAREN, WR, (WR, cf. deMey 210); WESENBERG, WS, (-); WISMAR, W, (see below); WITTENBURG, WT, (WT); WOLDEGK, WL, (WL, deMey 217). Some are shown in Fig. 4 (from deMey).

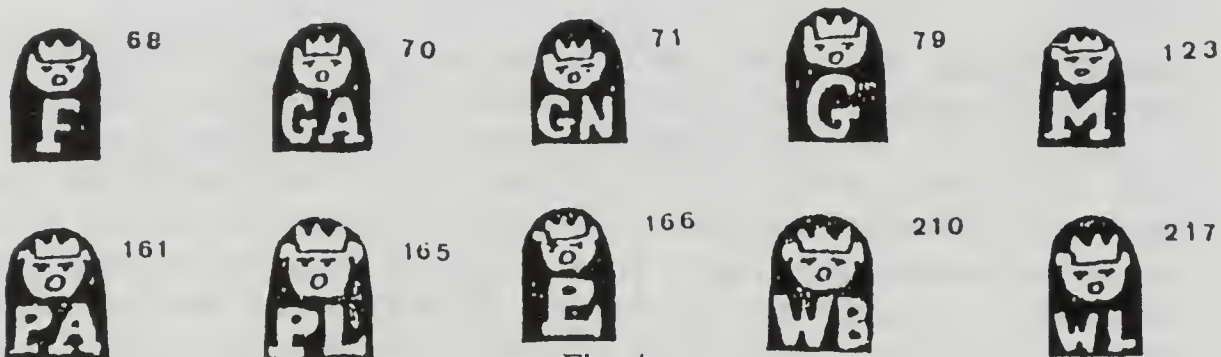


Fig. 4

The two cities Rostock and Wismar did not follow the ducal directives exactly, as being against their mintrights. Wismar probably countermarked with its arms (deMey 218, but see below). Rostock used Ro, without the bullshead (deMey 178) (Fig. 5).

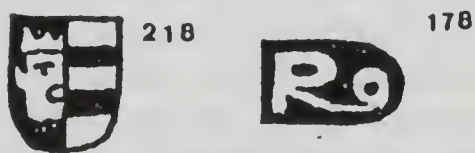


Fig 5

The small o often does not strike up. For the other towns too the bullshead occasionally does not accompany the letterstamp, but there it is accidental. In 1622-23 Rostock tariffed its countermarked double schillings at 1-1/2 current schilling. As at the time the taler was worth 48

current schillings, this equated 1/32 of a taler or the value of the old Lubeck standard single schilling.

Some 17th century double schillings have been found with only the bullshead mark. These may be the counterparts of the coins with only the letterstamps. But it is possible that they, along with the single coin found marked with the harnessed arm (body part) of Stargard and some of the coins stamped with the arms of Wismar, were the result of the decree of June 1620.

There is evidence from hoards that in contravention of the regulations, the countermarked double schillings, especially those of Rostock, did circulate as single coins. Another indication is a development in the bishopric of Schwerin, which took in part of the town of that name. Here the administrator, Ulrich II, 1603-1624, a brother of the Danish king, issued a currency decree in June 1621, according to which double schillings of good weight would be stamped with the arms of the state, two crossed bishop's crooks. Unmarked coins would be demonetized, while the counterstamped ones would circulate for the value of 1/32 taler, in other words one schilling of the old Lubeck standard. This was the same value that Rostock had given its marked double schillings of the same weight. The two dukes of Mecklenburg were furious, because this meant that in the middle of their territories coins, forbidden by them for use as single pieces, were actually put into circulation for just that purpose. The ensuing row was not settled until the Convention of Hamburg in March 1622.



That convention, held under the leadership of king Christian IV of Denmark, 1588-1648, united the Estates of Lower Saxony east of the Elbe river, as well as the two Pomeranian duchies, which belonged to the Upper Saxonian Circle. It regulated the value of the reichstaler at 48 schillings. The use of the old double schillings of nominally 1/16 taler was forbidden. As a temporary measure pieces of the right fineness and weight were tariffed at 18 pfennig or 1-1/2 schilling current money, and allowed to be used in sums up to six schillings but only until March 1623. It was proposed to return in stages to the old sound money of the standard of 32 schillings to the Reichstaler. But soon afterward the war intensified in this region. From 1628 to 1632 the dukes of Mecklenburg were even deposed in favor of the famous general Albert von Wallenstein. This prevented the return to the old valuation. East of the Elbe the schilling remained tariffed at 48 to the taler. Though coins of 1/16 Rtlr were again minted at a later date, their denomination would now be three schillings!

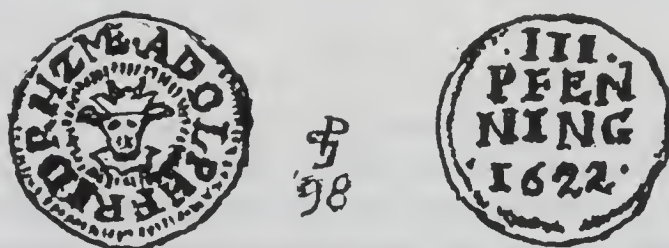


Fig. 6

One problem is still left. Each of the two Mecklenburg dukes had copper 3 pfennig pieces (witten) struck. As type (Fig. 6) they had the crowned bullshead, of different size for each duke, surrounded by his name and title on the obverse, with the value and date 1621 or 1622 on the reverse. Though copper coinage had not been completely unknown in Mecklenburg, it was not popular at the time. A large number was probably struck, but they are now not common. So what happened to these coins? I found a possible answer a few years ago. A worn 1627(?) Frisia duit that

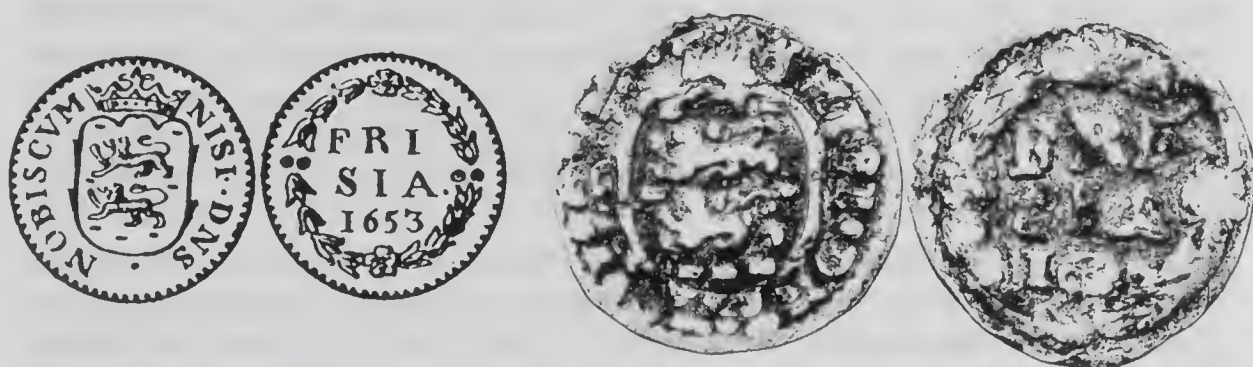


Fig. 7

Frisia Duit of the 1626-1663 Type

Overstruck Frisia Duit 1627(?)

I had bought turned out to have been overstruck on such a 3 pfennig piece of Mecklenburg-Güstrow (Fig 7). My speculation is that possibly the copper coinage was kept back and sold for scrap. The mint-master of Friesland, where copper coins were in actual use, could have bought a parcel of them. For him this would be a

good deal, for he could save money by using these coins as ready-made planchets. Up to now no data has been found in the archives of Mecklenburg or Friesland to refute or corroborate my theory. But after I published my find in the Netherlands another such duit turned up (Fig. 8). So maybe there is something to it.

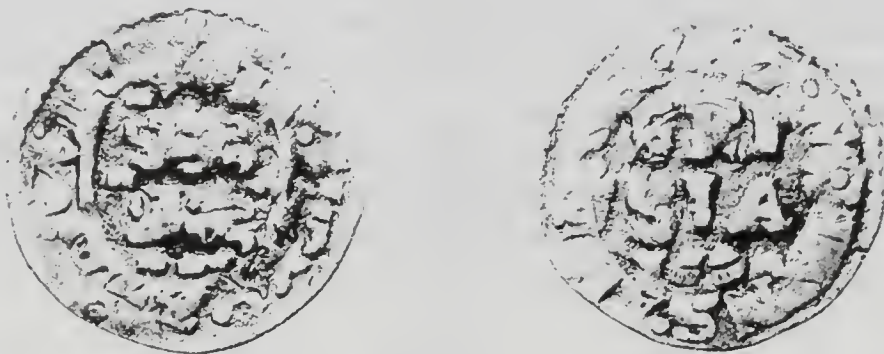


Fig. 8

POMERANIA (POMMERN) was a duchy along the Baltic coast on either side of the Oder river. Like Mecklenburg, it consisted of two parts, in this case ruled by cousins, with the secularized bishopric of Cammin interrupting the continuity of the state. In 1625 the entire duchy, including Cammin, would be united under its last native ruler, Bogislav XIV of Stettin (1618-1637). But during the Kipper and Wipper period the western part of the state was ruled by duke Philip Julius of Wolgast (1592-1625), while Bogislav's younger brother Ulrich was bishop of Cammin from 1618-1622.

At this time, even though the double schillings of the nominal Lubeck standard of 32 schillings to the taler were the main coins in circulation, the reckoning standard in use in Pomerania was the Sundish (Stralsund) schilling, worth only half a Lubeck schilling.

Pomerania, like Mecklenburg, was a main target for the influx of debased double schillings. But it took longer before measures against them were taken here. Even though both parts were signatories of the Hamburg coinage treaty of March 1622, only Pommern-Wolgast, the duchy immediately adjacent to eastern Mecklenburg, took an active part in carrying it out. As a matter of fact, by an edict of May 28, 1622, duke Bogislav XIV of Stettin ordered that his double schillings must be accepted for full nominal value of two (= four Sundish) schillings, which was not at all helpful.

In July 1622 in Pommern-Wolgast the doppelschillings of the right fineness and weight were reduced to 1-1/2 schilling (3 Sundish schillings). After examination, on August 2 a list was published of the approved coins. The others would for the time being be allowed at one schilling (2 Sundish schillings). All of this was much too complicated and only gave rise to confusion and cheating. Finally at the meeting of the Estates of Pommern-Wolgast a resolution was adopted on 7 September 1622 to tariff all double schillings of correct weight at 1-1/2 (= 3 Sundish) schilling and to have these counterstamped. This operation was to be carried out in several locations, and a separate mark was assigned to each (Fig. (9)).



Fig. 9

FRANZBURG, griffon right above F (deMey 67); WOLGAST, griffon left, occasionally with a 3 between the hind legs (deMey 167); STRALSUND, "strahl" (looks like an arrowhead with a cross on the point, deMey 192); GREIFSWALD, G3 (deMey 77); and ANKLAM, arrowhead between very small A and 3 (often the A and/or 3 are missing, cf. deMey 24). Judging by their occurrence in hoards, the marking was done on a large scale. Counterstamps are also known for DEMMIN, a double lily (deMey 56) and a mark of a connected HS probably stands for Hermann Sander, the mintmaster in Stralsund.

The Hamburg treaty saw the continued use of the old double schilling pieces as only temporary. In March 1623 they would be demonetized and that would of course also be the end of the counterstamping. This worked well for the western part of the treaty area, reasonably well for Mecklenburg, but apparently less well for Pomerania, judging by hoard evidence. It is thus possible that the countermarking did not stop in early 1623. The fact that some Pomeranian double schillings of 1628 were marked could indicate that, but could also be evidence for renewed emergency measures as a result of increased war activities in the region.

On some copper 3 pfennig pieces of Mecklenburg (-Güstrow) of 1621 (and 1622?) an oval counterstamp with GR has been found. This may have been applied in Greifswald. It is possible that the mark GB, reported for similar pieces is the same, misshapen or misread.

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I want also to thank Wolfgang Virk in Scherwin and especially Michael Kunzel in Berlin for their help in sending me data. Any errors in this story are mine.

Photos of the Frisian duits courtesy of the Royal Coin Cabinet in Leiden, The Netherlands.