
The MCA Advisory

The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America

Volume 9 Number 11

December 2006

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Dues: \$20.00/Year

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Coming Events

January 11-14, 2007--New York
International Numismatic Convention

MCA Meeting **January 13, 2007**

Stack's auction schedule is published on their website www.stacks.com since last minute changes to the Ford schedule have been known to occur unexpectedly.

What's New On Our Website!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

www.medalcollectors.org

From the Editor

Copies

When most numismatists here the word “copy,” they think “fake.” They have been reading too many detective stories, because most copies of medals are not meant to deceive. Rather, they are intended as placeholders in those cases where the original is so rare as to be non-collectable. With the same inscriptions and devices as originals, these copies evoke the same historical context that the medal’s designer had in mind.

The classic American series is the eleven Comitia Americana medals voted by Congress during the Revolutionary War. The legislators voted to have 350 sets of these medals made but, due to a series of oversights, this never happened and the dies got scattered. As a result, several of the Comitia Americana’s are prohibitively rare. Indeed, no collector has ever assembled a complete set of all 11 originals. (12 including Henry Lee made a few years later).

Faced with a strong desire to enjoy all of the underlying history, numismatists of the 19th century “filled the holes” with copies, many of which were made at the U.S. Mint by the inventive Franklin Peale. In his 1841 Register of dies, Peale acknowledged having the electrotype molds for Wayne, Stewart, Morgan and Greene among others. Examples of his work are handsome as well as faithful to the originals in all respects. The demand for these medals was so great that, in 1863, the Mint started making copy dies so as to be able to produce in volume. Checking the nineteenth century collections; we found ample evidence of the acceptability of copies. In his sale of 1859, Henry Bogert had original examples of George Washington, William Washington, Gates, Morgan (probably the 1839 copy dies), Howard, Jones and the Libertas. In addition, he possessed electros of Fleury, Wayne and Greene. There was no copy of Stewart or Lee. The 1884 sale of Isaac Wood’s medals

contained the same originals as did the Bogert sale with the addition of a Fleury. Wood seemed to prefer casts as in the cases of Greene and Stewart. His Wayne was “soldered copper shells”—i.e., probably an electro.

There are many other examples that could be cited but the point is made: fine copies of rare medals are eminently acceptable. Embrace them for the history that they portray

Dupré

(by Leonard Augsburger)

Rosine Trogan & Philippe Sorel Paris, *Augustin Dupré (1748-1833): Graveur Général des Monnaies de France*, (Paris: Paris-Musées, 2000). ISBN 2-87900-482-9.

Translator’s note: This recent study nicely gathers Dupré’s oeuvre into a single reference. Based primarily on the collection at the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, the work is thoroughly photographed and includes a concise and well sourced biography of this French engraver whose iconic work is intimately woven through early American numismatics. The French is uncomplicated and accessible to intermediate readers of the language. Copies are readily available online via amazon.com, abebooks.com, and other sources.

Excerpt, pp. 17-22 (translation):

The American Medals

Contrary to what Charles Saunier affirms [referring to Saunier’s 1894 biography of Dupré], it was not in 1778 but in 1784 that Dupré engraved the cachet [letter mark] of Benjamin Franklin [reference is made to a list of Dupré’s work in an appendix of the present volume, most likely prepared by his son and found in the archives of the French Mint], plenipotentiary minister of the United States in Paris from December, 1776 to July, 1785.

Although Franklin lived at Passy [Paris suburb] and Dupré had a house in Auteuil [neighboring Passy], the possible meeting does not suffice to explain the choice made by the diplomat [Franklin] of the engraver [Dupré] for several medals. The relations of Franklin and Dupré with Houdon [who created the celebrated Washington bust] seem to us a [possible] trail. Houdon modeled the bust of Franklin in 1778, one year after Caffieri [Italian sculptor who created a Franklin bust in 1777], and a bust of John Paul Jones in 1781. The Masonic relations must not be excluded, although Dupré was not a member, as were Franklin and Houdon, of the Lodge of Nine Sisters.

By the intermediation of Franklin, then of colonel [David] Humphreys, secretary of the embassy, and of Thomas Jefferson, the American Congress ordered the works of various artists. The first request was passed to Dupré by Franklin, the medal called “*Libertas Americana*”. The idea of the reverse came from Franklin, who precisely described it, in a letter, dated Passy, March 4, 1782, to Robert Livingston, secretary of foreign affairs. To represent the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, Franklin imagined an allegory, Hercules the infant in his cradle, strangling two serpents, France in the characteristic of Minerva, seated close by him, protecting him as a nurse.

A drawing of Gibelin preserved at the Museum of Blérancourt, dated 1783, carrying an inscription that confirms the idea as that of Franklin, includes important modifications: France [Minerva], standing, protecting with her shield the infant against the assault of the English leopard, to which she points her spear.

We know by a letter from Franklin to William Jones on March 17, 1783 that the engraving of the medal “is barely finished”. The slowness of the work of engraving for a subject as complex as that of the obverse and reverse of this medal allows us to consider whether or not the drawing of Gibelin was later than the execution of the medal. It is moreover

possible that the design is linked to another project derived from the medal, like the drawing by Dupré at the American Philosophical Society, which will be examined further. There are indeed two designs, by Dupré, comprising other modifications. One of the two, conserved at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, reversed in relation to the others, and the clay model preserved at Museum of Blérancourt, which is the closest to the actual work - Hercules being seated, not more in his cradle, but under a shield. The other design of Dupré, preserved at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, seems to us to be a project for another medal, not executed. It differs as much by the attitude and weaponry of Minerva, as by the leopard whose tail is no longer between its feet, a sign of cowardice as noted by Poulet [reference is made to *Clodion 1738-1814*, by Anne Poulet, Paris, 1992], but now erect; moreover, the date in the exergue, 1785, is after the striking of the *Libertas Americana*.

The clay model at Blérancourt, model of the medal, presents differences in some details. [For example, the Blérancourt model exhibits two fleur-de-lis on Minerva’s shield while the actual medal has three]. Poulet recently attributed this work [medal] to [Claude Michel] Clodion because of the style, and particularly because of the provenance [of the model], the sale of Brongniart in 1792, where it appeared, as well as the model of the obverse, as a work of Clodion. We maintain the attribution to Dupré. This medal is indeed particularly well documented by the exchanges of letters of Franklin. The name of Clodion is never mentioned. The sculptor [Clodion] is well known, his father-in-law, Augustin Pajou, was an academic and artist at the Academy of Inscriptions. It would be therefore most surprising that the name of Clodion, if this artist had furnished the model of the medal, would be totally absent during its preparation.

Poulet thinks that “[Dupré] had received a formation of engraving and metal smithing,

not that of a sculptor, and he could have estimated, in this case of an extremely important and prestigious request, that he must have, in order to translate the design into a powerful relief, the aide of an artist such as Clodion, at the height of his glory at the beginning of the 1780s and well known for his beautiful reliefs in clay". The reliefs in clay, wax, or plaster before the model, like the model of the medal "Birth of the First Mother" in 1778, proved enough the talent of the sculptor Dupré. This work, as others, attests to the familiarity of Dupré as much with the themes as with the style of Clodion, who was elsewhere brilliantly imitated by a number of contemporary artists. It is besides interesting to notice that an ancient example in clay of "Birth of the First Mother" had been provided with a false signature of Clodion, and attributed recently to [Louis-Simon] Boizot.

One must admit that if a relation of style with Clodion exists in the reverse of the *Libertas Americana*, it is absent in the beautiful profile of the woman on the obverse. This recalls rather, by the treatment of the hair, the works of Houdon such as the "Priest of Lupercales" (1768), the profile of Apollo in medallic [form] presented at the Salon and preserved in the Louvre, or also the double medallic portrait of the brothers of Montgolfier, although this one was probably not finished when the medal of Dupré [the *Libertas*] was struck. One could, just the same, connect the genius engraved by Dupré on the reverse of the Franklin medal in 1784 [reference is made to the Dupré's FRANKLIN NATUS BOSTON medal] with the Apollo cast by Houdon in 1790. The head of Liberty is in fact the first testimony marking the evolution of the style of Dupré toward classicism where the study of nature and of antiquity pleasantly balances each other.

The reputation of Dupré was already well established when Franklin charged him to engrave the *Libertas Americana*. The success of this medal engaged the American

representatives and their French friends to entrust to Dupré other works: the medals of Nathaniel Green and Daniel Morgan, of John Paul Jones, the diplomatic medal and the Great Seal of the United States. Franklin charged him to engrave his cachet, the friends of Franklin asked him for a medal to the glory of the representative [Franklin], at the point of his return to America.

In the contract signed by Dupré and Humphreys for the medal for Green, Dupré signed as "engraver in medals and medallist of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture". We have not found any trace of this qualification in the proceedings of this Academy nor in the correspondence of the Director of Buildings of the King. It is however possible that Dupré had been authorized to present himself in this way.

The American authorities entrusted to the Academy of Inscriptions the concern of editing the legends. Dupré therefore drew himself closer to the grand institutions of French artistry. At the same time, Benjamin Duvivier, official engraver of the Mint, saw himself also charged with some works by the United States: the medals of Colonel Fleury and General Washington. One reflects also on the engraving of Nicolas-Marie Gatteaux and of Dupré – Gatteaux received orders for medals of Generals Anthony Wayne and Horatio Gates, and for Major John Stewart.

One sees that the war of Independence of the United States was, for the principal French engravers, the occasion to emulate what appeared, for the historian, like a rehearsal of the competition that led, in 1791, to two competitions that carried Dupré to the post chief engraver in the Paris Mint.

In 1784, Dupré received also an order from the states of Provence for a medal in the honor of the flagship *Suffren*, a beautiful work in the line of those executed for the United States, and this, like the medal of Des Galois de La Tour was executed after a drawing of Gibelin.

The American medals, and other contemporary [medals], like La Jonction Souterraine de l'Escaut at de la Somme", prove the mastership of Dupré, at the time, in very different genres: allegories, battle scenes and ships, and portraits.

When the Answers Lead to Questions

(by Samuel Pennington), e-mail [smp@maineantiquedigest.com](mailto:samp@maineantiquedigest.com)
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One of the most seductive aspects of collecting medals is that you never quite know where a purchase will lead. Often it is to more knowledge, but sometimes that very knowledge raises more questions. Such is the case of two disparate medals discussed here.

I bought from a local dealer what I judged to be a 17th or early 18th century cast bronze uniface medal with a portrait of a woman, inscribed "**Lepida Sergii Galbae Uxor.**" The medal is holed, oval 94mm x 116mm. and unsigned. **(Figure 1.)**

I remembered enough high school Latin to know that "Uxor" meant "wife," so she was probably the wife of someone famous. I was not up enough on my Roman history to know that Servius Galba (ca. 4 BC- AD 69) was the Roman emperor who followed Nero and served for one year until he was murdered by his own cavalry.

The Internet, as organized by Google and others, has proved to be a great boon to stay-at-home researchers, and Lepida proved to be a great example. I Googled the name "Lepida Sergii Galbae Uxor."

One Google link took me to print dealer Donald Heald in New York (<http://www.donaldheald.com/>) who was offering a 17th century print of Lepida **(Figure 2.)** by Aegidius Sadeler (ca.1568-1629). In the print she is wearing the same clothing and hairdo as the medal.

Print dealer Heald theorized of the print: "A finely detailed portrait of the wife of Servius Galba (ca. 4 BC- AD 69). This stunning plate belongs to an impressive collection of distinguished portraits of eminent Roman Emperors and Empresses. The prints in this set depicting the classically posed Emperors are based on a series of lost paintings Titian executed between 1536 and 1540 for the "Gabinetto dei Cesari" of Duke Federigo Gonzaga of Mantua.

"The companion portraits of the lavishly attired Roman Empresses were not, however, engraved after original works by Titian. The scholar Harold Wethey surmises that these prints 'must be Sadeler's own invention, since they have nothing to do with Titian,' but a more plausible explanation is that were most likely engraved after paintings by Hans von Achen (1552-1615) and Bartholomeus Spranger (1546-1611), official artists of the Bohemian court of Rudolf II. (*The Paintings of Titian*, II, pp. 235-6)."

Heald and the art historians he quotes have their own questions, but for medal collectors, the question is which came first, the medal or the print? I'd guess the print, since the medal is a simplified version of the print. The next question is, are there more medals in the series after those prints? And if there are, who did the medals?

My second medal that has led to questions is a 77-mm. uniface bronze medal picturing three nude men running. It is inscribed "PHILLIPS-VAN HEUSEN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD," and the edge is marked "MEDALLIC ART CO, N.Y. BRONZE." **(Figure 3.)**

I bought it along with a 30-inch mahogany sculpture **(Figure 4.)** of the three men running with a plaque **(Figure 5.)** reading "PHILLIPS-VAN HEUSEN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WILLIAM ZORACH." William Zorach (1887-1967) was a Lithuanian-American sculptor of the first rank.

The sculpture and medal were accompanied by a letter from a Portland, Maine, resident, Robert J. Mohr, who explained, "In the mid 1950's I was Advertising & Sales Promotion Director of Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation which had its offices at 417 Fifth Avenue in New York City. The company was primarily in the dress shirt business but wanted to move "big time" into men's sportswear. To bolster this move it was decided that the company would give a highly publicized yearly award to an outstanding sports figure. I wanted to design an award that was as distinctive as the Heisman Memorial Trophy. I asked my assistant, Maurice Berger, to find a sculptor who could create something completely original.

"He came up with William Zorach who was affiliated with The Art Students League of New York. I think we paid him about \$1,500 and he came up with a wood carving of three runners racing. I don't know how many years the company kept this award going but it was still a yearly event when I left Phillips-Van Heusen in 1963."

In an effort to confirm Zorach as the artist, I wrote to several people and the Phillips-Van Heusen Company. The company did not respond.

Dick Johnson, who catalogued the archives of The Medallist Art Company, wrote, "I remember the medal. It is definitely Medallist Art. But I do not remember cataloging it. And that's my problem. I searched a chronological list from 1963 backward to World War II without any luck. Searching for Zorach, Van-Heusen or Phillips-Van Husen. Could his date be wrong?"

Joe Levine, president of Presidential Coin & Antique Company wrote that he could not find the medal listed in his records of MACO.

Jonathan Zorach, William Zorach's grandson, wrote back, "I have done a little looking through our records but so far haven't been able to find out anything about this. I think it's possible that my grandfather designed

the medal but that someone else did the carving based on his design."

So the questions are: "Was the medal designed by William Zorach? To whom was it awarded and when? Are there others in collections?" Maybe a reader has an answer.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 5



Figure 4

Ebay finds

(by David Menchell)

This is the first in what I hope will be a series of articles dealing with the online marketplace for purchasing medals. I plan on discussing interesting discoveries, areas of greatest activity and collector interest, as well as monitoring various aspects of the retail medal market as it has been impacted by online auctions. These venues, dominated by Ebay, have had a profound effect on interest in medals and the resulting price appreciation for those items in greatest demand. Another factor to influence the market has been the application of grading standards and slabbing previously applied to coins.

This month, I have a couple of recent and unusual EBay acquisitions to discuss.



Washington's Tomb by Cruchett: Struck medal, 1858
Baker S-128 variety, 70 mm, 1810.2 gns, Bronze

The first is a struck medal previously known only as a shell. This is the Washington Tomb vignette, Baker S-128, engraved by Abraham Demerest of New York and produced by J. Cruchett in 1858. Struck as brass shells, they were mounted on wooden discs said to be taken from trees grown on the estate, and were intended to be hung as wall decorations. In addition to those with a depiction of Washington's tomb at Mount Vernon, there were also plates produced with a view of Mount Vernon, Baker R-128. The opposite side was decorated with a circular engraving of Washington's bust, surrounded by Mount Vernon, a seated Liberty and shield, and the Tomb, engraved by the American Bank Note Company.

Previously, there was only an electrotype medal described by Joe Levine combining a Washington bust obverse with the Tomb reverse, Baker T-128, but no prior appearance of the Crutchett Tomb as a struck medal until the piece now described appeared recently on Ebay. The medal is 70 mm. in diameter, 4.6 mm thick at the rim. The obverse

matches that of the Crutchett Tomb shell. The reverse, while blank, has a raised rim. There is no evidence of any edge seam. It is struck in bronzed copper, with proof surfaces. One can only speculate on the circumstances for the striking of this unusual medal. Unfortunately, there was no relevant pedigree information from the seller.



General Daniel Morgan for the Battle of Cowpens, Comitia Americana

Restrike ca. 1970

Julian MI-7, 70 mm, 1810.2 gns, Bronze #55 of 150 struck

The second find is a restrike of the Comitia Americana medal awarded to Daniel Morgan for his actions at the Battle of Cowpens, Julian MI-7. While originally listed as a 19th century pattern, it later came to light that this particular medal was struck as number 55 of a numbered, limited edition of 150 medals ca. 1970. Struck at the Paris Mint, it is unusual in that it was produced on an exceptionally large 68 mm planchet, compared with the 56 mm diameter of the originals and 19th century restrikes. The dies for the Morgan medal have an interesting, if somewhat convoluted, history. The original dies were produced in Paris by Augustin Dupré and used to strike Morgan's gold medal and several silver and bronze medals around 1789-90. Over time, the original gold medal was lost and in 1836, Congress authorized the striking of another gold medal, to be issued to Morgan's heir, Morgan Neville. The original dies were not available in the U.S. and Neville pressured the government to have copy dies prepared in Paris. This was done in 1839 by M. Barre, using the silver original from the set given to George Washington (then in the possession of Daniel Webster). By November, the dies were received at the Philadelphia Mint, with a gold medal being struck the next month. Unfortunately, by this time, Neville had died. It took an additional two years before the medal was sent to Neville's heir, his son.



The level of artistry demonstrated on this medal is superb, considered by many to be the finest of the American Congress medals produced in Paris. Looking at the die characteristics of this medal, it does not match the original Paris or Barre dies. This is to be expected, since the original dies were lost within several decades of their creation, and the Barre copy dies were sent to Philadelphia soon after their production for striking the gold and subsequent bronze medals. Looking closely at this medal, there are small die cracks suggesting some degree of usage prior to the striking of this medal. I have little information regarding this limited edition, and would appreciate any further documentation regarding this particular medal, or whether other medals of the Comitia Americana series were struck using the same format.

Space Medals

These photos go with the excellent article in our November issue by Howard C. Weinberger. We apologize for not including them at that time.







Will then take pen in hand and generate an article for the "Advisory" on his reminiscences. All the best for the New Year. Merry Christmas,

Spencer Peck

Here is an exchange of email messages between Joe Levine, Don Scarinci and Dick Johnson. Medal collectors will find this a special holiday treat

(Joe – This is a brilliant exchange. Kudos to you for provoking it.—ed.)

Dick and Don:

One of my customers has asked me if I knew any reason why Kilenyi was never asked to do an SOM medal. Do either of you know why that might have been?

Joe

Joe & Don:

Why did not Kilenyi do a Society of Medalist issue? The answer is quite obvious.

He was not selected by the Trees who ran the Society, Clyde Curlee Trees before he died in October 1960, Frances Trees from 1960 until she retired from the Medallic Art in 1976.

Frances was very **class conscious**-- everyone had rank or level of reputation in her mind--perhaps due to her strong German heritage. In her mind, and perhaps Clyde before her, Kilenyi was not of the same class of artists as the artists they did select.

Despite the fact Kilenyi had all the credentials --fellow of the National Sculpture Society, member of ANS, Allied Artists of America, Audubon Artists, and others -- they did not consider the level of his work was up to the level of the artists they wanted, and selected, to do Society issues.



Letters to the Editor

John,

Just to let you know that I do read the MCA Advisory.

I Just got off the phone with Mr. Requa. We'll be getting together after the Holidays to discuss Admiral Vernon and other things numismatic.

Yet they issued dozens and dozens of medal commissions to Kilenyi (who did hundreds of medals). It is my opinion they considered him a "work horse" rather than a "thoroughbred" -- and perhaps treated him as such.

Kilenyi did not do a Society medal for the same reason Ramon Gordils did not do a Society issue. (Gordills was Medallic Art's in-house sculptor and treated as an employee --not like an outside fine artist--but he was so competent he often corrected and improved outside artists' models!).

Some sculptors are top modelists but are weak on designing. This is why some of Neil Cooper's medals were designed by Paul Calle and modeled by Joseph DiLorenzo. Joe created fantastic models. Paul had outstanding designs. The combination of the two resulted in a number of stunning medals.

The only other reason could be they kept Kilenyi so busy he did not have time to do a Society medal. But I feel the above reason has more validity.

Dick

Joe and Dick:

The collector asks a good question and Dick Johnson, as usual, probably has the right answer. The collector might also have asked about Ralph Menconi. He got to do an SOM and he wasn't in their "club."

I can speculate on an answer about the difference between Menconi and Kilenyi, but it all comes down to age. Both artists were workhorses for MACO and both were outstanding and prolific artists. Neither received a Saltus award. Neither ever seemed to be in the inner circle of sculptors.

My guess is that Menconi was younger and in the next generation. By 1966 when he did his Jefferson SOM, the gang was looking for new artists to do medals because they've begun to exhaust the inner circle. Up until the

1980's, the Society's rule has always been one medal only. By 1966, the buddies had all done medals and they began to tap the workhorse artists like Reed, Harris and Notaro. Kilenyi died in 1959.

Don.

Joe and Don:

Don brings up an excellent point and Don I hope you expand on this in your SOM book. There was, indeed, a "clique" or "club" of sculptors, all members of the National Sculpture Society.

It is well known this group looked down on sculptors who didn't do the figurative, realistic, representational sculpture they did. They often criticized the artists who did "welded steel" -- they did not consider this fine art and prohibited artists who did this from membership in the National Sculpture Society.

The "club" aspect was even more evident in the Hall of Fame Series. Carl Paul Jennewein, as head of the art committee, dealt out the lush commissions for this series (\$1,500 each if I remember correctly!).

He gave these to all his sculptor friends, all members of the club. The important point, however, is that they were all qualified. Every one of the HOF series is a top work of medallic portrait art. Jennewein kept nine of these for himself and "favored" his friends--mostly in the club--at his whim with all others.

The analogy to horses mentioned is appropriate. The NSS club members were the **thoroughbreds**. Menconi, Kilenyi, DiLorenzo, Gordils were the **workhorses** (among others). There was also another category, the **show horse**. This would be exemplified by Michael Lantz. He was on all the committees, he got all the awards, all the perks, and he was always pictured at every event. But his work was only mediocre (his Two-part medal was atrocious). He got this reputation because his brother was so famous (Walter Lantz invented Woody

Woodpecker) and donated a lot of money to Michael's causes. I could name some other show horses in medallic art (but they are still alive).

Until I read Don's reply I didn't realize Menconi was outside the club. But this is accurate. This brought up a favorite memory. After an NSS function we attended, Bob Weinman, Ralph Menconi and I all rode together on the same commuter train leaving Grand Central Station (for Westchester where we all lived). We shared a double seat facing each other. The conversation was delightful.

I didn't realize it at the time but Menconi was still trying to impress Weinman. His Apollo 11 medal had just come out and it was the first medal Menconi had a "piece of the action." He was paid a royalty by Presidential Art based on the number of medals sold, rather than a fixed commission. He was telling Bob Weinman this to impress him I'm sure, and perhaps bragging a little that this was a "first" in American sculpture. (The series was quite successful and it did earn Menconi a good deal.)

But Weinman was in the club. Menconi wasn't. It's clear to me now. Thanks for this insight, Don. I was too close to the forest to see the trees. (And to make a pun of that--the Trees, Clyde and Frances!)

Joe, your question brought up an excellent opportunity for some deep thinking. Thank you both!

Dick

Dick and Don:

I think this exchange should be reprinted in the MCA monthly! Do I have your permission to send it to John Adams?

Joe

Both: Yes!

John,

A note for the MCA Advisory:

Images of the Princeton specimen of the Diplomatic Medal, one of only three known examples of the original striking, are online on the new database of the University's Numismatic Collection, at <http://www.princeton.edu/~rbsc/department/numismatics/>. This piece was part of a large gift of medals to Princeton from Cornelius Vermeule III.

Alan M. Stahl