

The Valais coins of the  
episcopal period

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Ernest Lehr, doctor of law, professor at the Academy of Lausanne, Essay on  
Swiss numismatics, Lausanne 1875.

This study drew a great deal of information from the volume by Palézieux-Du  
Pan: Numismatique de l'Evêché de Sion, Geneva 1909, which constitutes the basic  
work of Valais numismatics.

It is above all from this angle — and much more than from the  
technical aspect — that this study presents the series of Valais coins  
of the episcopal period, by scrolling through these coins in their  
frame and in the light of the historical facts which explain. Moreover,  
since it cannot go into detail and mention all the coins, this study  
only stops at the headings, that is to say the coins of particular  
interest, either because of their presentation, or because from the  
historical fact that they recall

It will not speak either of the coins which would have been minted in  
the 10th and 11th centuries when, according to the numismatist Lehr  
1, the bishop of Sion, like the bishops of Basle, Chur and Geneva,  
had the right to coin money . It will not stop either at the Mauritian  
denarii minted in Saint-Maurice from the 13th century by the Count  
of Savoy.

The first coins of the so-called episcopal period are those minted  
by Walther II Supersaxo, bishop of Sion from 1457 to 1482. Walther  
Supersaxo can be considered as the founder of the country's  
independence and this for two reasons. It is

This study begins with the coins minted by the Bishop of Sion  
from the time when Valais secured its independence against  
Savoyard claims. It will follow the development of numismatics in  
Valais, focusing in particular on the relationship between coins and  
historical events.

Beginning in the episcopal period, this study disregards, in the  
numismatic history of Valais, the Merovingian coins minted in Sion  
and Saint-Maurice, towns which both had their mints at that time.

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Dr. \_ WA Liebeskind, Bishop Walther II on the Flüe, Landrecht of the  
Valais region and court order, Bern 1930.

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We therefore see him exercising his functions as a legislator and he  
promulgates new Statuta Patriae Valesiae . We also see him exercising the  
regal right to coin money and we have various coins minted during his reign.  
On the coins that we have, appear the initials of the bishop and the first quarter

of the arms of the Supersaxo family - which bears Gules with a golden crown and on the mount of three strips of Vert moving from the point -, arms that we will find in the 18th century, either only in this form, or separated with a lion on three cutlets, on the coins of the third bishop of this family, François-Joseph Supersaxo.

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It is natural that Bishop Walther Supersaxo, author of the independence of the country, made use of his sovereign rights.

Walther Supersaxo's successor, Jodoc of Silinen, bishop

he who inaugurated the reign of bishops chosen no longer from the old feudal families, but from among the autochthonous population, and it was he who put a definitive end to the attempts at domination of the Duke of Savoy, by winning the brilliant victory of the Planta, November 13, 1475, victory following which Upper Valais secured the conquest of Lower Valais.

However, as far as coins are concerned, it seems rather that their issue should be considered as post-1475, since the act by which Bishop Walther Supersaxo regulated the minting of coins and their course in relation to foreign coins dates from 1479 and that this regulation must probably have proved necessary immediately or at least shortly after the issue of the new coins. Thus, the affirmation of sovereignty represented by the minting of coins in the name of the Head of State seems to date from the period following the victory won over the Duke of Savoy on November 13, 1475, by which Walther Supersaxo ensured independence of Valais.

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These coins, remarkable for their beautiful Gothic characters, are all without date stamp. Were they struck already at the beginning of the reign of Bishop Walther or did they postdate the complete independence of the country resulting from the victory of 1475? It should be noted in this regard that the act of sovereignty accomplished by the promulgation of the new Statuta Patriae Valesiae is, according to historians, prior to the victory of November 13, 1475, which demonstrates how Bishop Walther Supersaxo, from the beginning of his reign, had the deep concern to manifest his very firm will to act as sovereign.

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We have a teston from Jodoc de Silinen without vintage.

Jodoc de Silinen was succeeded by a bishop bearing a brilliant name of particular brilliance in Valais and Swiss history, the name of Schiner. However, it is not yet Matthieu Schiner, the Cardinal of Sion, but his uncle Nicolas Schiner, whose coins occupy a leading role in numismatics in the Valais, although his reign only lasted a very long time. not much time.

We have said that Walther Supersaxo established the system of bishops chosen from among native families. If his successor is still an exception, since he belongs to a family from central Switzerland and was bishop of Grenoble before becoming bishop of Sion, we must not forget, however, that the family of Silinen was allied to families from Valais. — for example to the de Platea — and that his mother, Isabelle de Chevron, was from Valais.

There is also - and we know of two examples, one of which is in

the National Museum in Zurich - a quarter mint minted by Jodoc de Silinen. It bears the lion of the arms of Silinen on the obverse and the fleur-de-lysée cross on the reverse.

from 1482 to 1496, maintains the tradition that his predecessor has just created: he strikes coins.

First of all, it is interesting to note that the first coins minted when he was only apostolic vicar bear

Three kinds of coins minted by Nicolas Schiner — who reigned from 1491 to 1499 — hold particular attention .

This piece is very interesting in that it gives us the profile of this bishop, a profile that reminds us of the first representatives of the Renaissance, both men of the Church and politicians, both intellectuals and men of action. . This profile bears no resemblance to the portraits and images of the bishop which have come down to us in another form. But we are convinced that the monetary effigy certainly gives the profile closest to reality, when contemporary portraits are lacking and we only have portraits or images from a later period where the authors let themselves go with their imagination and to their fancy.

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EA Stückelberg, The coin collector, French edition by A. Mercier, Lausanne 1900, p. 30: “These pieces of the fifteenth century correctly render the features of the secular and ecclesiastical princes of that time”.

Swiss National Museum Zurich, 62nd anniversary dir 1953, p. 35

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Dicken by Nicolas Schiner

Supersaxo arms and Saint Théodule

Diameter of the original part: 28.5 mm

EA Stückelberg, The coin collector, French edition A. Mercier, Lausanne 1900, p. 67.

Valais legends, published by the Historical Association of Upper Valais, 1907.

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Some saw in it a testimony of gratitude towards Walther Supersaxo, founder of the country's independence, or towards Georges Supersaxo, to whom Schiner owed his appointment as vicar apostolic. Others saw in it the desire to issue a currency bearing the arms of a prince who left the memory of a great patriot and an

influential man; others finally think that it is a phenomenon which is not unknown in numismatics and according to which one takes up the effigies, drawings or indications of the preceding coins not the arms of the Schiner family, but the first quarter of the arms of the Supersaxo family.

The caption at the base of this image takes various forms.

How can this anomaly be explained?

But the great innovation introduced into coins by Nicolas Schiner is the introduction of the image of Saint Théodule, first bishop and patron saint of Valais, and especially the image of Saint Théodule accompanied by the bell and the devil.

Here is how the collection of Valais legends published by the Société d'Histoire du Haut-Valais 7 reports it: By a vision, Saint Théodule learns that the Pope in Rome is in danger.

Studying how he could warn him, he sees three devils outside his window. He asks them which of them is the fastest. One replies that he goes as fast as the wind, another that he is as fast as the arrow and the third that he

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Thus, an article entitled *Anecdotes Numismatiques*, which appeared in the *Etrennes Helvétiques et Patriotiques* published in Vevey for the year of grace 1817, expresses itself as follows on this subject :

is as mobile as a woman's thought. The bishop then agrees with the latter that he will transport him to Rome and bring him back to Sion before the first crow of the rooster announcing daybreak.

This imagery has attracted much attention and has been the subject of various comments.

There are also various variations on this theme and either forms or variations of the legend, Saint Théodule always has as an attribute, in religious imagery, the devil and the bell.

It was Bishop Nicolas Schiner who, for the first time, included this subject on his coins, and this in various forms.

The Prelate wanted to preserve a piquant anecdote from the Legend of this saint, patron saint of Valais, which tells us that having gone to Rome under the pontificate of Leo III, this Pope gave him a present of a large bell for his church in Sion; that very embarrassed on the means of transporting it in the middle of the Alps, he found none more expeditious and less expensive than to engage the Devil to carry it himself on his back and that this one luckily did this trip with the bell, free of charge it is true, but with rather bad grace. The famous cardinal of Sion, Matthew Schiner, who came to the same episcopate in 1500, found this corner so well chosen that he kept it with a few slight changes; thereafter his successors put only the bell on their coins: the evil spirit no longer appeared there, because

The trip takes place. Saint Théodule transported to Rome warns the Pope of the danger which threatens him and in recognition the Pope gives him a bell. In all haste, the devil brings Saint Théodule and the bell back to Sion, but when he arrives, the white rooster of Saint Théodule, particularly vigilant, begins to crow, followed immediately by the black rooster of the

devil. The devil thus finds himself having failed in his promise to bring the bishop back before the rooster crows. In rage, he drops the bell which sinks underground, but which the bishop succeeds in bringing to the surface through prayers.

Nicolas Schiner, bishop of Sion, issued in 1498 shields which on one side bore his effigy with his name and his titles of prefect and count of Valais, and on the other Saint Théodule in full episcopal costume, having at his feet the Devil with a bell.

The devil then places a black rooster as a sentinel at the entrance to the city and Saint Theodule on his side places a white rooster opposite it.

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8 Maurice de Palézieux, op. cit.

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Finally, a last coin by Nicolas Schiner is of particular interest for Valais history. It is the 1498 thaler, called the Carlin, where we see the Emperor Charlemagne making a donation to Saint Théodule of the county of Valais. This act of donation to Saint Théodule, called the "Caroline", plays a very important role in the history of the country. History and legend mingle there in a curious way and which deserves that we stop there.

It is in formal contradiction with historical truth since Saint Theodule lived four centuries before Charlemagne!

bad jokes had made scandalous jokes out of it, and that these ignoramuses had taken the Devil for the boss in spite of his horns. It is the first time that this enemy of the human race has had the advantage of appearing on a coin and it will undoubtedly be the last: this singular type has earned the coins which bear it the honor of the medal in the curious collections.

Let us add that from an artistic point of view, the coins of Nicolas Schiner present the devil and the bell in a very original and lively form, both naive and vigorous, which makes one think of the medieval sculptures which are the object of our admiration in the porches of cathedrals.

Saint Théodule promises only one, but, some time after his return to his country, an angel informs him that God has heard his prayer and granted Charlemagne the remission of his fault. Saint Théodule informs Charlemagne who, in recognition, gives him the county of Valais Such is the legend.

de Platea, Hildebrand de Riedmatten and Hildebrand Jost.

According to legend, Saint Théodule would have gone to a council or a meeting of many bishops where Charlemagne, troubled by remorse for a fault committed, asked the prelates to pray for his forgiveness. Each bishop promises several masses.

We indeed find the devil on the coins of Philippe

Moreover, even if one considers the name of Saint Theodule as a symbol representing the bishopric of Sion, the donation of the county to the bishopric by Charlemagne cannot correspond to historical truth, since, as Andreas rightly points out Heussler,

Leaving aside the anachronism making Saint Theodule living in

the fourth century a contemporary of Pope Leo III who reigned from 795 to 826, the indications of the author of this article on the elimination of the devil in the coins minted by the successors by Matthieu Schiner do not quite correspond to reality.

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J. Gremaud, *Sedun Charters. Memoirs and documents published by the Society for the History of French-speaking Switzerland*, t. XVIII, Lausanne 1863.  
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the donations of counties were still unknown at the time of Charlemagne  
However, despite  
this anachronism and this material impossibility, the "Caroline" will be constantly  
invoked by the bishops for the defense of their rights.

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The room is very beautiful; it bears the image of Charlemagne seated on his throne and his forehead girded with the crown, which gives Saint Théodule the sword with his right hand, symbol of temporal power.

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First of all, a three-gross without vintage. It bears on the obverse Schiner's coat of arms surmounted by the miter with baleen, the crozier and the sword; on the reverse, it is, full length, Saint Théodule, with the crosier and the sword, and Saint Catherine, also patroness of Valais, who, a sword in her right hand, holds her robe in her left hand. The image, although rather crude and naive, is of the most beautiful effect. It is distinctly Gothic, without hinting at the evolution that the Renaissance will bring.

By representing the legendary donation of the county of Valais to Saint Théodule by Charlemagne, Nicolas Schiner no doubt wanted, at the very moment when he exercised the royal right to mint coins, to affirm publicly that he held his skills from the great emperor.

A second coin by Matthieu Schiner which should be considered is the six-gros without vintage which bears the Valais motto on the reverse: SOLI • DEO • GLORIA • and on the obverse the bust of Matthieu Schiner, of profile, in Episcopal habit and with a sour head. These pieces come in many varieties. Thus, the profiles of each piece of Schiner give the prelate a slightly different face. Despite these differences, these pieces come, we believe, to make an important contribution to the controversial question of the authentic portrait of Matthieu Schiner. This contribution is all the more precious since we have every reason to think that the master coiners had to strive to make the princes whose effigy they engraved a portrait as

We now come to the coins minted by Matthew Schiner, Bishop of Sion from 1499 to 1522, the famous "Cardinal of Sion".

In fact, the County of Valais was given to the Bishop of Sion in 999 by Rodolphe III, King of Bourqogne. But legend prevailed over historical fact and it was the legend of Charlemagne and Saint Theodule that formed the basis of the claims of the bishops against the "Patriots" in the 16th and 17th centuries .

Andreas Heussler, *Legal Sources of the Canton of Valais*, Basel 1890.

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Diameter: 2.8mm

Six-gros from Matthieu Schiner

Effigy and motto of the prelate

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resembling as possible 11. And if the profiles of Schiner appearing on his coins are not all identical, the features of the prelate nevertheless all express, with audacity and tenacity, intellectuality and diplomatic finesse, at the same time as a land belonging, traits that characterize the Cardinal of Sion. They no doubt reflect his personality better than the various portraits that we have of him, which are often not contemporary. By studying the profile of Schiner on his coins, one hesitates to accept the thesis, flattering no doubt, but perhaps too audacious, which would like to recognize Matthieu Schiner in a famous portrait of Cardinal by Raphaël's brush and which is the glory of the Prado Museum, although this attribution has for it the authority of Robert Dürer, the famous archivist of Sarnen, Linus Birchler, president of the Federal Commission of Historic Monuments, Paul de Vallière, the historian of the Foreign Service, etc In his magnificent work on the Valais Portrait, M. Albert de Wolff, curator of our Cantonal Museums, did not want to take a definitive position on the question, while showing the arguments of those who think they recognize Schiner in the portrait. of the Prado.

On the coins minted by Matthew Schiner, the effigy of Saint Theodule plays a very important role and it is on the famous thaler of 1501 that it is the most impressive. On the reverse we see the Saint seated majestically on his episcopal throne, holding the crosier and the sword. On his right, the devil approaches carrying the legendary bell.

EA Stückelberg, op. cit.

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Above the head of the Saint, a banner attached to the crosier proclaims : EXAVDITA EST and the legend inscribed around the edge of the coin expressly says: + PRECIBVS : s: THEODULI : DIMIS SA: EST • CVLPA • CAROLI. Behind the Saint, the devil comes, according to tradition, to bring the bell to the Saint.

But the most interesting coin in the series of coins from

Thus, as Philip of Platea cannot be indicated as reigning bishop, it is the name of Saint Theodule which appears on the reverse and instead of the inscription noting the success of the intercession of the Saint in favor of Charlemagne, it All that remains, as an allusion to the legend, is the inscription on the banner indicating that the prayer of the saint in favor of the emperor has been heard: EXAVDITA EST.

It represents, in fact, on the reverse, a synthesis of the two legends of which we have spoken, namely the legend of the devil bringing the bell to Saint Théodule and the legend of Saint Théodule obtaining the remission of the fault of Charlemagne in recognition of what Charlemagne makes to the Saint donation of the county of Valais. We see Saint Theodule dressed

in the cope, wearing the mitre, holding the crosier and the sword, kneeling in front of the altar prepared for the mass. The angel appears to him to tell him that God has heard his prayer and has forgiven Charlemagne his fault. The 1528 thaler, a very beautiful and very rare coin, reproduces on the reverse the image of Schiner's 1501 thaler, namely the image of the so-called " Mass thaler", with some modifications.

harvest".

bishop from 1522 to 1529.

What should be noted in particular in the coins of Philip II of Platea, whether they are quarters, half-batz, plaparts or thalers, is that the arms of Philip II of Platea appearing on these coins are never surmounted by the miter or the crozier, but simply placed on the sword placed as a bar.

Similarly, the legend does not bear the title of bishop, but simply the mention ELECTVS • SEDVNENSIS. This is because Philip II of Platea, designated as bishop by the capitular body and the deputies of the tens, never saw his election confirmed by Rome.

Combining the legend of the devil and that of Charlemagne, this representation is of the most beautiful effect.

Matthieu Schiner is another thaler from 1501, dit « Thaler de la

And Matthieu Schiner succeeds Philip II de Platea qui fut

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Thaler of Matthieu Schiner (1501)

Avers

Schiner arms surrounded by the arms of the Chapter, the seven Decades and various Châtellenies

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p 11-21:

Diameter: 42mm

Saint Theodule seated on his throne

Same taler

Reverse

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Same arms as on the previous thaler with, in addition, the arms of the Bishopric preceding those of the Chapter

Another thaler from Matthieu Schiner (also 1501)

Avers

said "Thaler of the mass"

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Reverse

Same taler

Saint Théodule in front of the altar



and appearance of the angel

Diameter: 46mm

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Demi-dicken d'Adrien Ier de Riedmatten (1542)

Arms of Riedmatten and bust of Saint Theodule

Thaler of Philippe de Platea (1528)

Diameter: 44mm

Diameter: 27mm

Weapons of Platea resting on the only princely sword

We have various coins from Adrian I of Riedmatten: deniers, quarters, batz, half-batz, dickens and half-dickens with or without year, which are all rare or very rare coins. They bear the arms of the Riedmatten family and several of them the effigy of Saint Théodule. The smaller pieces give Saint Theodule a bust, three-quarter length, but without the bell. The largest bear Saint Theodule seated facing forward, with the bell at his feet, but the devil has disappeared.

Unrecognized by Rome, Philip II of Platea decided to resign from office in 1529. He was replaced by Adrian I of Riedmatten who reigned from 1529 to 1548.

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From an artistic point of view, these coins become more elegant.

They lose their Gothic character; the figures and designs become more flexible, more refined. The shield of the bishop's family, instead of being straight and rigid in shape, takes on a more flexible and elegant form. It is the same, in particular for the dickens, of the representation of Saint Théodule which is less rigid and less hieratic.

We then have the important coins of Bishop Hildebrand de Riedmatten who reigned for thirty-nine years, from 1565 to 1604. During this long reign, Hildebrand de Riedmatten struck many coins: denarii, quarters, kreutzers, demi-batz, batz, demi-dickens, dickens, thalers and even a ducat.

Some authors have claimed that Bishop John Jordan issued gold coins. The hypothesis has not been proven and no gold coins of this bishop have been found.

This thaler is however different from the thaler of Matthew Schiner, because if we still see the saint majestically seated on the episcopal throne, the devil, instead of advancing towards the Saint carrying him the bell, is already at his feet in the form of a small dragon.

Some of these coins are inspired by those minted by its predecessors. Thus, like Jodoc de Silinen and like Mat thieu Schiner, Hildebrand de Riedmatten strikes a teston in his effigy. The bishop is shown in profile, his head tonsured. The face, of great finesse, has the features of an intellectual and a scholar.

Among the new presentation coins minted by Hildebrand from Riedmatten, we have among others the kreuzer from

Also, like Matthew Schiner, Hildebrand de Riedmatten hits a dicken with the full-length image of Saint Theodule and Saint Catherine.

The design has hardly changed over half a century; perhaps, however, it has become clearer.

In particular, we have from Hildebrand de Riedmatten a magnificent thaler reproducing the legend of the devil and the bell. Adrien I of Riedmatten succeeded Jean Jordan, bishop from 1548 to 1565. His coins — denarii, quarters, batz, dickens and half-dickens — are all also rare or very rare. They are similar to those of Adrian I of Riedmatten except that instead of bearing the arms of the Riedmatten family, they bear the arms of the Jordan family, either simple, or surmounted by the date of the strike, or finally stamped with the miter with baleen as well as the sword and the butt.

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1594 where the right bears a very interesting combination of heraldic emblems of the Riedmatten family presented freely without shield and surmounted by episcopal insignia.

But Hildebrand Jost did not have the possibility of minting coins throughout his reign and his last coins date from 1627. From 1628, it was indeed the Republic of Valais - whose name then appeared for the first time — which, in an act of sovereignty, arrogates to itself the right to mint money. The coins it issues bring a real revolution right down to their presentation. While the kreuzers and demi-batz still bear the name of Saint Théodule on the reverse, on the obverse only the shield of the Republic of Valais appears - with the seven stars representing the seven ten shields surmounted by the single-headed imperial eagle.

Finally, we have the gold ducat without year which bears on one side a recirculated or buckled cross and on the other the shield of the Riedmatten surmounted by the bust effigy of Saint Theodule. The renunciation of the "Caroline " was for the bishop a loss not only of prestige, but also of effective power.

Hildebrand de Riedmatten's successor, Adrian II de Ried matten, bishop from 1604 to 1613, did not strike coins, but Hildebrand Jost , who succeeded him and reigned from 1613 to 1638, struck many coins. They hold particular attention, because they are the last that the bishop will strike in possession of his full sovereignty. Under pressure from the representatives of the people, Hildebrand Jost will indeed have to give up the rights conferred on him by the "Carolina" and he will find himself obliged to share his powers with the Diet.

It is a particularly rare piece.

A Valais poet, Louis de Courten knew, in a poem

In the batz of Hildebrand Jost we have for the first time the single bust of Saint Theodule whom legend and tradition give as the beneficiary of the "Caroline" and who, after Hildebrand Jost's renunciation of this alleged charter of donation , will definitely

disappear from Valais coins.

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In the half-thaler of 1624, we find Saint Théodule with the devil and the bell. The Saint is shown standing with sword and crozier, but this time trampling on the devil carrying the bell. The face of the Saint presents a good-natured and quiet aspect, while the devil looks angrily at the bell he holds in his hands and vigorously raises his feet as if in protest.

Louis de Courten, *La Terre valaisanne*, poems, 1905.

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The bishop can mint them only with the authorization of the Diet, which appoints a coin inspector. The new powers of the Republic counterbalancing those of the bishop appear expressly on the coins themselves. If the new coins still bear on the obverse the shield of the bishop still mounted on the miter with the crosier and also the sword, they bear on the reverse the shield of the Republic of Valais surmounted by the imperial eagle. The effigy of Saint Theodule no longer appears there, and there is no longer any question of the legendary donation of Charlemagne; the very name of Saint Theodule is no longer mentioned. However, if the reverse bears in the center the shield of the Republic of Valais surmounted by the single-headed imperial eagle, we still find, in the graining which surrounds this shield, the mention of the title of the bishop as prefect and count of Valais, somehow following the name of the bishop on the obverse.

of Parnassian rhythm entitled *Larmes d'évêque*, vigorously evoking the sadness and pain of Hildebrand Jost forced to give up the "Caroline":

The specter of the bailiff and the franc-patriot

Seems to haunt the spirit of the collapsed bishop.

Adrian III of Riedmatten minted a series of various coins, many of which have come down to us, so that these coins are common and not rare. However, an exception must be made for the coins in more precious metal which the Diet and the prelate, anxious, it seems, to make the Valais coins of better quality, issued during this reign. These are the batz d'argent struck

And towards the hearth reddened slowly he  
inclines His senile brow, prey to black presentiment; A tear  
falls down her emaciated cheek: Hildebrand  
Jost, tonight, is thinking of "Caroline."

However, despite this, the Republic of Valais only minted coins once, in the year 1628.

It is therefore necessary to wait for the advent of Adrian III of Riedmatten, bishop from 1640 to 1646, to have Valais coins again, but

these coins are entirely new.

Moreover, a fairly long period elapses without a new issue. During the last eleven years of her reign, Hildebrand Jost also stopped minting new coins. His successor, Barthélemy Supersaxo, bishop from 1638 to 1640, took refuge in Martigny because of the plague, did not have time to be consecrated and did not mint coins either.

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in 1644, silver demi-batz minted in 1646 and especially a kreuzer without vintage minted in gold. It is, after the ducat without year minted by Hildebrand de Riedmatten and of which we spoke above, the second gold coin of the Valais.

If these coins do not have, either, character of rarity, they are on the other hand very well minted and do honor to the artists who designed them and to the coiners who executed them.

Let us add that these coins have a very clean and clear strike and that they do honor to the medalists whose work they are. These master coiners were, moreover, specialized and sometimes well-known craftsmen. Let us mention in particular the master coiners of the Krauer family from Lucerne, one of whom, Georges Krauer, worked in Sion from 1677 to 1683, and another, Guillaume Krauer, from 1707. The reputation of these coiners was considerable and a document in the Historical Museum of Schwyz indicates that JC Hedlinger, who was later to become the famous medalist, did his apprenticeship in Sion in 1709 with the mint director Krauer.

It was he who was the master coiner of the successor of Adrian V of Riedmatten, Bishop François-Joseph Supersaxo, who reigned from 1701 to 1734. During this long reign, François-Joseph Supersaxo, statesman and man of the powerful and influential Church since the Pope would have offered him the cardinalate 16, struck many coins.

Adrian III's successor, Adrian IV of Riedmatten, bishop from 1646 to 1672, did not mint coins. On the other hand, the next bishop, Adrian V of Riedmatten, bishop from 1672 to 1701, strikes a large quantity. A large number have come down to us, so that these coins are generally not rare, with the exception of a kreuzer without year minted in gold 14 and which is the third Valais gold coin.

The smallest module coins of Bishop Francis

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the Palézieux-Du Pan, op. cit., p. 216. de  
Palézieux-Du Pan, op. cit., p. 223.

P. Rudolf Henggeler, A Swiss Artist in the Swedish Service.

The medalist Johann Karl Hedlinger. Offprint of the Swiss Employers' Newspaper, Nos.  
5 and 6, of February 11, 1944.  
Saint-Maurice 1940.

I. Tamini and Pierre Délèze, New Essay by Vallesia Christiana,  
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Joseph Supersaxo carry as bishop's arms the same arms that we  
have seen appearing in the coins of Walther Supersaxo and Nicolas  
Schiner, namely the first quarter of the large Supersaxo arms. On  
the other hand, the currencies of larger module give the whole  
Supersaxo weapons with their four quarters. If the kreuzers, demi-  
batz, batz, do not call for any special remark, we must mention the  
piece of twenty kreuzers of 1709 which, from the artistic point of view,  
is innovative and thus presents a very great interest. Its author is  
the engraver Hedlinger, who, as we have seen, did his apprenticeship  
in Sion and who later became very famous, in particular for his activity  
in Sweden 17. On the obverse, we see a cartridge loaded with the  
large Supersaxo weapons , surmounted by the episcopal insignia.  
On the reverse appears a completely new and very graceful  
composition. The shield of the Republic of Valais is no longer  
surmounted by the imperial eagle, but by the Virgin seated facing on  
the clouds, haloed with seven five-pointed stars — seven stars, the  
same number as that of the Decades —, having on her knees the  
Child Jesus and holding a scepter in her right hand. The Latin text of  
the caption that accompanies the image is not. as in the plays of  
Matthieu Schiner, the motto SOLI • DEO • GLORIA, but the very  
terms of the consecration to the Virgin : SVB TVVM PRAESIDIVM.  
From an artistic point of view, the design is already very much in the  
style of the beginning of the 18th century and is almost reminiscent  
of the Baroque in the favorable sense of the term. Bishop François  
Joseph Supersaxo seems to have had an artistic sense adapted to  
the modern taste of his time and, in the stately home he built in  
Mayens de Sion, there are very modern Venetian frescoes for his  
time.

During his long reign, Bishop François-Joseph Supersaxo had  
issued a quantity of coins sufficient for the needs of the country so  
that his two successors: Jean-Joseph Blatter, bishop from 1734 to  
1752, and Jean-Hildebrand Roten, bishop of 1752 to 1760, did not  
mint coins. And so we come to the last bishop who minted coins in  
Valais, François-Frédéric Am Buel, who reigned from 1760 to 1780.  
We have kreuzers, demi-batz, batz, six-kreuzers and twelve kreuzers  
from him. . These coins are in the tradition of those minted by  
François-Joseph Supersaxo. They have a clear and precise outline  
and also do honor to their master coiners, including David-Antoine

Städelin, whose S. mark we find on certain kreuzers from 1776.  
P. Rudolf Henggeler, op. cit.

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The minting period of episcopal coins ended with Bishop Am Buel and the new coins which will subsequently be used in Valais will no longer be Valais coins.

In this regard, an interesting fact both from the historical point of view and from the numismatic point of view deserves to be noted. It is reported in the following form by Blanchet

:

This fact highlights the spirit of generosity of the bishop who would have anticipated the events by getting ready to restore by himself the political equality which will be realized only later following many struggles. One of these rare pieces by Bishop Am Buel is in the National Museum.

At the time of his accession to the dignity of bishop of Sion, F. Fré déric Am Buel, wanting to suppress the territorial distinction of Haut and Bas-Valais, had batzens struck bearing, instead of the legend: PRAEF[ECTVS] ET COM [ ES] REIPVB[LICAE] VALLES[II] which had been adopted since the Republic of 1628, a new formula which seemed to put Upper and Lower Valais on the same political rank, namely: COM [ES] ET PRAEF[ECTVS ] VTR[IVSQVE]

Let us add that, in accordance with the taste of the century, the arms of the bishop like the arms of the Republic of Valais appearing on the various pieces of this period are very ornamented.

VALLE[SII]. But the State of Were worth did not want to admit these parts; the batzens of Am Buel were withdrawn from circulation, demonetized and remelted, which explains their rarity by giving them a certain historical value.

Bishop Am Buel also minted a twenty kreuzer coin similar to that issued by François-Joseph Supersaxo and mentioned above.

However, it differs somewhat and we see the letters DS which are the initials of coiner David Städelin.

On small-module pieces such as kreuzers, only the first quarter of the Am Buel arms is found, while larger-module pieces bear the full arms with the four quarters of the Am Buel, surrounded by the name of the bishop. On the reverse, the Valais shield is surmounted by the double-headed imperial eagle with the mention of the titles of count and prefect of Valais carried by the prelate.

unpublished from the bishopric of Sion, Lausanne 1864.

A. Blanchet. Valais numismatics. Note on some coins

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If I particularly raise it, it is to find an excuse or a justification — *aut excusatus aut laudatus erit* — for having presented the Valais coins of the episcopal period much more from the angle of history than from the angle of the technique. Moreover, however interesting and rich in discoveries it may be in itself, the science of numismatics would be incomplete if it were not animated by the reflections of history which contribute so largely to giving it everything. its meaning and true significance.

Let us recall, before concluding, that, according to tradition, the bishop's mint was at the current location of the penitentiary, that is to say on the sides of the hills of Valère and Tour billon, so rich facts and historical memories, and, if *parva licet componere magnis*, we will recall that the mint of the coins of ancient Rome was likewise found on the slopes of the Capitoline hill, the history of which is entirely linked to that of Rome 19 .

We express our gratitude to Mr. Albert de Wolff, curator of the Cantonal Museums of Valais, who kindly helped us to illustrate this article.

Charles KUNTSCHE

According to tradition, the term "money" (*moneta*) comes from the fact that the coin workshop was set up in Rome on the site of the temple dedicated to Juno Moneta, that is to say Juno whose geese had warned (*monere*) the Romans of the coming of the Gauls.

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