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*ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROJECTIONS OF  
THE ERETZ ISRAEL MUSEUM*

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## **PROVINCIAL MUSEUMS AND ACADEMIC NUMISMATICS THE EXAMPLE OF THE MUSÉE DÉPARTEMENTAL DES ANTIQUITÉS DE LA SEINE-MARITIME**

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The Musée départemental des Antiquités de la Seine-Maritime is one of the only French provincial museums to have a full-time numismatist. The coin collection is indeed very important. From the very foundation of the museum in 1831, the curators have acquired coins and medals by purchase, gifts and deposits. The varying fields of interest of the successive curators are clearly reflected in their choice of coins: e.g. Deville (1831-1848) bought a large and representative range of Celtic coins, whereas Cochet (1867-1875) and de Vesly (1905-1920) took interest in local coin finds. In the last 20 years, purchases have concentrated on local coin production, from the 1st century BC to the 19th century AD.

Formerly, the museum had only one or two curators, and they had to take care of all the collections: archaeology, fine arts, architecture etc. Some of them did spend time on the coin collection, others not. From the 1960's on, the scientific and technical staff expanded largely. Thus, Jacqueline Delaporte, along with her other tasks in the museum, became the first specialized curator of the coin collection. At her retirement in 1992, I took over the Coin Room on a full-time-basis.

The collection is of utmost scientific interest. First and foremost the coins themselves, of course, but also the archives, consisting of handwritten registers recording the origin of the coins, notes on coins shown by visitors to the curators, and articles from local papers on coin finds. These archives are not always as precise as one would like, but they nevertheless represent an important mass of information. Jacqueline Delaporte largely made the collection available to specialized scholars in different fields. Thus, Simone Scheers has published the important collection of Celtic coins, Xavier Loriot used the collection and the archives for his Corpus of Antique coin hoards, and Jean Lafaurie worked on the Merovingian coins, to name only three. Students also found material in the collection for their masters' dissertations. But still a lot of potential remains for future research.

The main interest of the collection in the future is in two fields:

- The local coin production. As I said before, the museum tries to constitute a representative collection of the types and varieties struck in the Seine-Maritime County. Eventually, research in the State and County archives should allow us to complete the picture of the mint activity: precise out-put figures, minting periods, etc.
- Local coin finds. For the moment, I have chosen to concentrate my efforts on this field. The collection contains several hoards and stray finds, that have not yet or only partly been published. Unfortunately, several coins have lost their labels, and the information in the registers

is not always precise enough to reidentify them. The registers thus contain information on finds now mixed up in the collection, but even this information allows us to constitute partial records of finds, of which nothing at all would have been known otherwise.

At the same time, I have undertaken a survey of old finds of medieval and modern coins from the following sources:

- Local history journals and monographies.
- Municipal museums of the region.
- Handwritten notes from local historians and archaeologists.

These sources are not primarily numismatic, so one has to look through them very carefully to gather all pieces of information.

In France, there is no standard procedure for recording coins from archaeological excavations. Often the coins are identified by collectors or sent to Paris or another research centre. Collaboration with a local numismatist is of course easier to date the coin's layer or structure. It is then up to the local numismatist to centralize the recording of coins from several excavations, and thus create a data-base. This will allow statistical exploitation for studying coin circulation. This is of course only possible with a substantial data-base gathered over several years.

Having a numismatist locally also allows us to record the finding of hoards and single finds in the region. It is always easier to address someone locally than in Paris. Sometimes rumours of undeclared finds come up and must be investigated. These finds are then reported to the archaeological authority. Thus, finds are saved from dispersion and/or oblivion.

The aim of this work is to make information on local coin finds available for scholars. This is done by publishing articles on local coin finds. The information can then be used by all interested scholars in numismatics or in history. One possible use will be to do a synthesis on coin circulation in the region on the basis of statistical exploitation of the coin finds. This method of course requires a great number of records to be reliable. As everybody knows, lots of finds are being dispersed without being recorded. Others, which have in fact been recorded in scattered sources of information, remain unknown to scholars. Having a scholarly-trained, full-time numismatist on a permanent basis in the local area greatly increases the rate of recovery in these fields. Just to give one example: in 1970 Jacques Yvon published a survey of English short Cross pennies found in the whole of France. His research was done on a national basis with information from a wide range of sources. From Upper Normandy (Counties of Seine-Maritime and Eure), he recorded three hoards. I have been able to add eight finds. Six of them were only known from museum archives, 19th century daily newspapers and scattered local history literature. The two last finds contained a recent stray find and an excavation find.