



Reiner Cunz  
*Regionalism and unity: 50 years of the  
German Numismatic Commission*

*Actas de la VIII reunión del Comité Internacional de Museos Monetarios y Bancarios (ICOMON) = Proceedings of the 8th Meeting of the International Committee of Money and Banking Museums (ICOMON), Barcelona, 2001.*

*ICOMON. - Barcelona : Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, 2003.  
pp. 23-34*

Downloaded from: [www.icomon.org](http://www.icomon.org)

# REGIONALISM AND UNITY: 50 YEARS OF THE GERMAN NUMISMATIC COMMISSION\*

Reiner Cunz

Hanover, Germany

*CONCORDIA DITAT* reads the Latin motto on coins minted in 1617 (fig. 1 a/b) just before the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), which brought discord, misery and death to Germany to an extent never seen before in its history. The coins were minted by the two brothers Julius Ernst (1571-1636) and August the Younger (1579-1666), Dukes of Brunswick and Lueneburg and heirs to an early modern territory, the Guelphic principality of Dannenberg. The coin type was the only one issued **jointly** by the two rulers who considered the minting of money to be a fundamental right of a sovereign prince and otherwise used it as a source of income for themselves. Sovereignty and harmony are not contradictory. Each is linked to the other and in fact they coexist, as is not only evidenced by this historical example.

Coins displaying the ethos of harmony in written and pictorial form, by symbols or by legends, have existed since ancient times. This is one of the numerous phenomena in numismatics spanning several periods of history. These phenomena link colleagues and cross all borders of specialization and unwritten laws of division of labour. In this sense, a numismatist is both a specialist and a generalist. The same specialized language is spoken and the same methodological tools are used in different branches of numismatics. The term *concordia* can also be found in various contexts in the early modern era. The most prominent examples are the well-known coins of the United Netherlands with the motto taken from a quotation by Sallust: *concordia res parvae crescunt (discordia maximae dilabuntur)*. The motto and the idea behind it were distributed widely by coin propaganda. They were passed from hand to hand and came to Germany by coin circulation.

The interpretation of the 'concordia coin' requires a regional, historical approach. Numismatics is, in terms of content and methodology, a discipline linked to regional history, at least for the medieval/modern era in Germany. Like the work carried out by coin cabinets, the research of coin finds is organized federally as part of archaeological preservation. This reflects the federal development of the German State and its roots in historical fragmentation. The cultural sovereignty of the German Federal States is one of the characteristics of the present German constitution. Federalism as a political principle and regional history as a methodological

\* Lecture given at the VIII ICOMON Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the 19<sup>th</sup> General Conference and the 20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Barcelona, July 2001. The aim of this English language essay is to enable both non-specialists and colleagues from the world of international museums and international numismatics to become familiar with the concept and organizational structure of the German Numismatic Commission. Abridged English version of the introduction to the commemorative publication: Cunz, 2000a, pp.13-31. Further references can be found there. Thanks to Ann Brogan (Frankfurt/Main) for her help in translating this text.

principle of research converge here. This should not be understood as particularistic because there is much common ground, as in many other areas of cultural and political life. This applies to all levels: The German Numismatic Commission was founded with the approval of the *Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (KMK; Permanent Conference of German Federal Ministers for Education and Cultural Affairs). Therefore, the structure and the title of the *Numismatische Kommission der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (NK; Numismatic Commission of the States of the Federal Republic of Germany) closely follow the example of the KMK. The idea to involve the Federal States directly in the Commission's work for the self-administration of numismatics came from Professor Walter Hävernick (1905-83). It was realized with the support of the *Hamburger Kulturbehörde* (Hamburg Cultural Authority). All Federal States accepted the invitation to join the commission. This method of organization diverges completely from other archaeological and historical commissions and committees of experts whose members are individual scholars. The Federal States are the members of the German Numismatic Commission and they nominate selected scientists as their representatives.

### ***Concordia Ditat - Harmony enriches***

The epigram of a coin should serve as a motto for a community devoted to numismatics as a science. It is, of course, to be understood as a motif for the Numismatic Commission, a motif in a figurative, ideal sense. Of course, the Commission has never been rich in a material sense. Its members are its capital and therefore its wealth is their creativity and commitment to the community.

However, one must not neglect to mention the legacy of Gitta Kastner-Kanein (d.1977) and Dr. Werner Kanein (d.1986), of whom the Numismatic Commission was a beneficiary. Their legacy consists of a trust administrated by the Numismatic Commission. The income from the interest forms the basis for research and documentation activities by the so called *Gitta-Kastner-Stiftung*. It is evident that the Commission is, to a large extent, dependent on the support of patrons and donors. It will have to rely on this more and more in the future and will need many strong partners. In this respect, the Federal States should not be forgotten, which, in spite of budgetary difficulties, provide the basic budget through their annual membership contributions to the Numismatic Commission.

The motif *CONCORDIA DITAT* has much relevance for the history of the Commission. Structural problems in numismatics intensified as a result of the Second World War and the post-war period. In addition, the integration of German numismatics within the international community of colleagues, which had been lost for the same reasons, had to be brought about. The knowledge that unity provides strength inspired the foundation

of the Commission. Later, German reunification was another central topic and marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Commission. The merging of East and West was, and will continue to be, one of the defining moments for the Numismatic Commission as well as for other numismatic associations. Enthusiasm for the same subject led to friendships and helped to overcome division. Both union and unity constitute enrichment. They constitute a positive step, although harmony often remains difficult to achieve. Unity and variety are opposites in name only. The quest for unity should never repress different opinions and individual concepts, as voluntary engagement is one of the fundamental principles of the Commission's work. The internal struggle for common solutions, wherever possible, creates the basis for external representation of interests. The ability to deal with conflicts constructively is a benchmark for the stability of every community. Numismatics will need this stability even more as a basis for its work in the future. In times of fundamental change in cultural policy, (in particular organizational and financial restructuring of cultural work) which concerns small scientific fields, smaller scientific institutes and individual departments, the concept of community and unity will win. Or in other words: *concordia res parvae crescunt*.

### **Another Anniversary**

A new beginning and reconstruction during the post-war period led to the foundation of numerous organizations, associations and committees. Since 1995 there have been many 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries in Germany. As in many fields, redevelopment began as early as 1945. Therefore, many new organizations are indeed older than the Federal Republic which was founded on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1949. This also applies to numismatics: from 1947 to 1954 numismatic conferences were held in Hamburg and Munich, and special scientific journals were also established in the two cities in 1947 and 1949. Hamburg and Munich were the locations of primary importance in the early years of German post-war numismatics. After a slight delay, national organizations were founded, of which the *Numismatische Kommission* was the first. It was founded in Munich on Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday June 16<sup>th</sup> 1950 after the major preparations had been done in Hamburg. The first constituent meeting was held and is regarded as the actual act of foundation.

In 2000, the Commission celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation (NNB 2000; Cunz 2000b; Cunz 2000c). Again on Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday June 16<sup>th</sup>, and in the city where it was founded, the anniversary meeting was held. With the hospitality and support of the *Bayrische Staatsregierung* (Bavarian Government), the *Staatliche Münzsammlung München* (State Coin Collection Munich), the *Bayrische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Bavarian Academy of Sciences) as well as numerous sponsors, it was possible to prepare both an interesting and varied

programme of events. The Numismatic Commission is extremely grateful for their great help. The highlight of the festivities was the state reception given by the *Freistaat Bayern* (Free State of Bavaria) in the Munich castle, the *Residenz*, honouring fifty years of commitment to scientific numismatics.

The focal point of the anniversary was an address by economic historian Professor Karl Heinrich Kaufhold (Goettingen University) on numismatics and economic history (Kaufhold 2000). He paid tribute to *genius loci* Professor Hans Gebhart (1900-60), former director of the Munich coin cabinet, and his contribution to this field of research. Gebhart's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday was on April 20<sup>th</sup> 2000. Around 50 years after his book, *Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* (Numismatics and the History of Money) - intended as an introduction for students - was published, the time had come to take stock and develop a fruitful cooperation with economic history, a relatively modern university discipline. Professor Kaufhold, a well-known and experienced scholar, has also been active in many ways in scientific organization, in part as a member of the Board of the *Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Social and Economic History Society), which has long lasting connections with the Numismatic Commission.

In 1950, the foundation of the Numismatic Commission took place in the context of a major conference by the *Bayerische Numismatische Gesellschaft* (Bavarian Numismatic Society), which brought together several experts in Munich. The Bavarian Numismatic Society, today the largest organization of its kind in Germany and at the same time publisher of the traditional *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* (Yearbook for Numismatics and the History of Money - since 1949), was one of the guests of honour at the anniversary celebrations. Hans Gebhart was one of the editors in the early years of the Yearbook. It is no coincidence that his book and the tide of the periodical, both from 1949, are so similar. This was intentional: even the academic *venia legendi* for Gebhart was entitled *Münzkunde **und Geldgeschichte*** (Study of Coins and History of Money). Today, the yearbook is the only scholarly periodical on the history of coins and money in Germany. It therefore particularly deserves the Numismatic Commission's attention.

The Numismatic Commission's anniversary was not the only numismatic event taking place in Munich. The annual general meeting of the *Verband der Deutschen Münzenhändler* (German Coin Dealers Federation) and the meeting of the Federation of European Coin Dealers Associations (*FENAP*) also took place at the same time. Both were chaired by Dr. Hubert Lanz (Munich). The German Association was founded in Mainz in 1952 during the second *Deutscher Numismatikertag* (German Numismatics Conference). Close ties with the Numismatic Commission have existed from the beginning, a relationship which was reflected in the programmes

of the annual conferences. In doing so, both sides expressed the desire for good cooperation between professional scientific numismatics and sophisticated coin dealing.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, scientific numismatics enjoys the support of a broad range of numismatic organizations. The *Deutsche Numismatische Gesellschaft - Verband der Deutschen Münzvereine* (German Numismatic Society - Federation of German Numismatic Associations) is currently the umbrella organization for more than 80 local societies. The Numismatic Commission and the former *Verband der westdeutschen Münzvereine* (Federation of West German Numismatic Associations), founded at the first *Deutscher Numismatikertag* in Goettingen in 1951, have been closely connected since their foundation. In its early years, the *Numismatisches Nachrichtenblatt* (Numismatic Newsletter - since 1952) was the joint organ of the two bodies. Since early summer 1999, this tradition, commenced by Walter Hävernick, has been renewed by the Numismatic Commission's announcements column. It is anchored in the editorial concept of the *Nachrichtenblatt*. Up-to-date information on the current work carried out by the Commission and its members is to be made available to a broad public as promptly as possible. The aim is to report on the progress of the activities and therefore create a bridge between the annual conferences and the annual reports. Feedback has indicated that there is substantial interest in the Numismatic Commission.

This brief outline shows that the anniversaries in 2000 (Numismatic Commission: for science), 2001 (German Numismatic Society: for coin collectors) and 2002 (German Coin Dealers Organization) have not been strung together coincidentally. Although each of these major numismatic organizations founded in the early post-war era has its own specific tasks, they are closely connected in a variety of ways.

### **The Numismatic Commission in Publications**

The Numismatic Commission did not just want to celebrate its anniversary, but also to look back and take stock. It was a time to think over its guiding concepts of the past, present and future. Its history is one of the threads of the scientific development of numismatics in post-war Germany. Surprisingly little of the Commission's work in the field of the organization and promotion of scientific aims, as well as maintaining its own long-term scientific projects, has been expressed in writing. Anyone searching for information on the Commission and its tasks and aims will have difficulty finding comprehensive and informative material. The Commission's "public relations" are characterized by modesty and reserve. Quiet work focusing on effectiveness has always been the top priority. However, the attentive reader will always be able to find hidden indications: for example in subsidies for publications, grants for travelling costs or studies based on

the Commission's *Münzfundkatalog Mittelalter/Neuzeit* (Coin Find Catalogue Middle Ages/Modern Era). Apart from the annual reports, press releases and annual conference reports that have been published primarily in the *Numismatisches Nachrichtenblatt* and in recent years in the *Geldgeschichtliche Nachrichten* (Money History News), there is very little relevant literature on the Commission's activities. In addition to using print media as the classic form of communication for science, the Numismatic Commission has recently been employing the Internet as an electronic medium. Its homepage is on the server of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft ausseruniversitärer historischer Forschungseinrichtungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Association of Non-University Historical Research Institutes in the Federal Republic of Germany) in Munich.

It was in 1976 that Hävernicks introduction to the *Fundkatalog Mittelalter/Neuzeit*, a 16-page booklet serving as a *vade mecum* for users, was published. The brochure proved its value in practice and was a guide for many students and scholars of other disciplines. Ten years later, an up-dated second edition had already become necessary. Strictly speaking, the booklet was the Commission's only direct publication.

### **Concept and contents of the commemorative publication for the Numismatic Commission**

The Numismatic Commission took the opportunity afforded by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary to increase its literary presence (fig. 2; Cunz, 2000a). A commemorative publication allowed it to look both to the past and the future of the Numismatic Commission on the one hand, and to present personalities, key topics and projects on the other. It was generally agreed that the book should be published due to the foundation and the first phase of the Commission and so this was accomplished in Hamburg in the *Numismatische Studien* (Numismatic Studies), the periodical founded by Walter Hävernicks, the founder of the Commission in 1951. The book is a result of the team work of 18 authors, and it demonstrates the team spirit of German numismatists, similar to the motto mentioned in the opening of this essay.

Those who would like to obtain more information on the Commission's history, structure and projects can refer to the book which contains articles in the following sequence: After the editorial, the new logo is presented, which the Commission gave itself in its anniversary year. In the initial activities-and-cash-report of 1950/51, the period of the foundation of the Commission is addressed from the point of view of its founder, Walter Hävernicks. This is followed by biographical information on major figures in the Commission's history: Walter Hävernicks, Hans Gebhart and Konrad Kraft. Two articles address general topics related to

the Commission's work: international cooperation and German unification. This is followed by a description of the Commission's long-term projects:

- *Antiker Münzfundkatalog* (Catalogue of Ancient Coin finds in Germany: only for the first decade).
- *Münzfundkatalog Mittelalter/Neuzeit* (Catalogue of Coin Finds of the Middle Ages and the Modern Era): coins mainly from the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries found in Sweden, Estonia and Poland.
- *Gitta-Kastner-Stiftung*/Database of the lives and work of German medallists since the foundation of the Second German Empire (1871).

The final section of the book provides various overviews of history, personalities and addresses together with the statutes.

## **Appendix**

### BOARD OF THE NUMISMATIC COMMISSION

Dr. Reiner Cunz, Hanover, First Chairman

Dr. Hermann Maué, Nürnberg, Second Chairman

Dr. Ursula Hagen-Jahnke, Frankfurt/Main, Secretary

Mr. Ulf Dräger, Halle/Saale, Treasurer



## **MEMBERS' ADDRESSES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER (SPRING 2003)**

*Address*

*Function: Landesvertreter (deputy)/Beisitzer (adviser)*

1. N. N.  
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden  
Münzkabinett  
Schloss, Georgenban  
Schlossstraße 25  
01307 Dresden  
Landesvertreter Freistaat Sachsen
2. Dr. Hans Roland Baldus  
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut  
Kommission für Alte Geschichte und  
Epigraphik  
Amalienstraße 73 b  
80799 Munich  
Beisitzer Deutsches  
Archäologisches Institut
3. Dr. Reiner Cunz  
Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum  
Hannover  
Urgeschichtsabteilung  
Willy-Brandt-Allee 5  
30169 Hanover  
Landesvertreter Niedersachsen
4. Ulf Dräger  
Staatliche Galerie Moritzburg  
Landesmünzkabinett Sachsen-Anhalt  
Friedemann-Bach-Platz 5  
06108 Halle/Saale  
Landesvertreter Sachsen-Anhalt
5. N.N.  
Thüringisches Landesamt  
für Archäologische Denkmalpflege  
Humboldtstraße 11  
99423 Weimar  
Landesvertreter Freistaat Thüringen
6. Dr. Karl-Josef Gilles  
Rheinisches Landesmuseum Trier  
Münzkabinett  
Weimarer Allee 1  
54290 Trier  
Landesvertreter Rheinland-Pfalz
7. Dr. Ursula Hagen-Jahnke  
Deutsche Bundesbank  
Geldmuseum  
Geldgeschichtliche Sammlungen, F401  
Wilhelm-Epstein- Straße 14  
60431 Frankfurt/Main  
Beisitzerin Geldmuseum  
Deutsche Bundesbank
8. Dr. Lutz Ilisch  
Universität Tübingen  
Orientalisches Seminar  
Forschungsstelle für  
Islamische Numismatik  
Wilhelmstraße 26  
72074 Tübingen  
Beisitzer Orientalische Numismatik
9. Dr. Peter Ilisch  
Westfälisches Landesmuseum für  
Kunst und Kulturgeschichte  
Münzkabinett  
Domplatz 10  
48143 Münster  
Nordrhein-Westfalen,  
2. Landesvertreter (Westfalen)
10. Dr. Claudia Klages  
Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn  
Münzkabinett  
Fraunhoferstraße 8  
53121 Bonn  
Nordrhein-Westfalen,  
1. Landesvertreterin (Nordrhein)

11. Dr. Ulrich Klein  
Württembergisches Landesmuseum  
Münzkabinett  
Altes Schloss  
Schillerplatz 6  
70173 Stuttgart  
Baden-Württemberg,  
2. Landesvertreter  
(Württemberg)
12. Prof. Dr. Niklot Klüßendorf  
Hessisches Landesamt  
für geschichtliche Landeskunde  
Wilhelm-Röpke-Straße 6 C  
35039 Marburg/Lahn  
Landesvertreter Hessen
13. Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kunow  
Brandenburgisches Landesamt für  
Denkmalpflege und Archäologisches  
Landesmuseum  
Wünsdorfer Platz 4-5  
15838 Wünsdorf  
Landesvertreter Brandenburg
14. Dr. Alfred Löhr  
Focke-Museum  
Bremer Landesmuseum für  
Kunst und Kulturgeschichte  
Schwachhauser Heerstraße 240  
28213 Bremen  
Landesvertreter Freie Hansestadt  
Bremen
15. Dr. Friedrich Lüth  
Landesamt für Bodendenkmalpflege  
und Archäologisches Landesmuseum  
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern  
Schloss Wiligrad  
19069 Lübstorf  
Landesvertreter  
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
16. Dr. Peter-Hugo Martin  
Badisches Landesmuseum  
Münzkabinett  
Schloss  
76131 Karlsruhe  
Baden-Württemberg,  
1. Landesvertreter (Baden)
17. Dr. Hermann Maué  
Germanisches Nationalmuseum  
Münzkabinett  
Kartäusergasse 1  
90402 Nuremberg  
Freistaat Bayern,  
2. Landesvertreter
18. N. N.  
Staatliches Konservatoramt  
Schlossplatz 16  
66119 Saarbrücken  
Landesvertreter Saarland
19. Prof. Dr. Bernhard Overbeck  
Staatliche Münzsammlung München  
Residenzstrasse 1  
80333 Munich  
Freistaat Bayern,  
1. Landesvertreter
20. Dieter Raab  
Münzhandlung Dr. Busso Peus Nachf.  
Bornwiesenweg 34  
60322 Frankfurt/Main  
Beisitzer deutscher Münzhandel
21. Albert Raff  
Deutsche Numismatische  
Gesellschaft e. V  
Böhmstraße 14  
70597 Stuttgart  
Beisitzer deutsche Münzvereine
22. Prof. Dr. Joachim Reichstein  
Archäologisches Landesamt  
Schleswig-Holstein  
Annettenhöh  
Brockdorff-Rantzau-Straße 70  
24837 Schleswig  
Landesvertreter Schleswig-Holstein

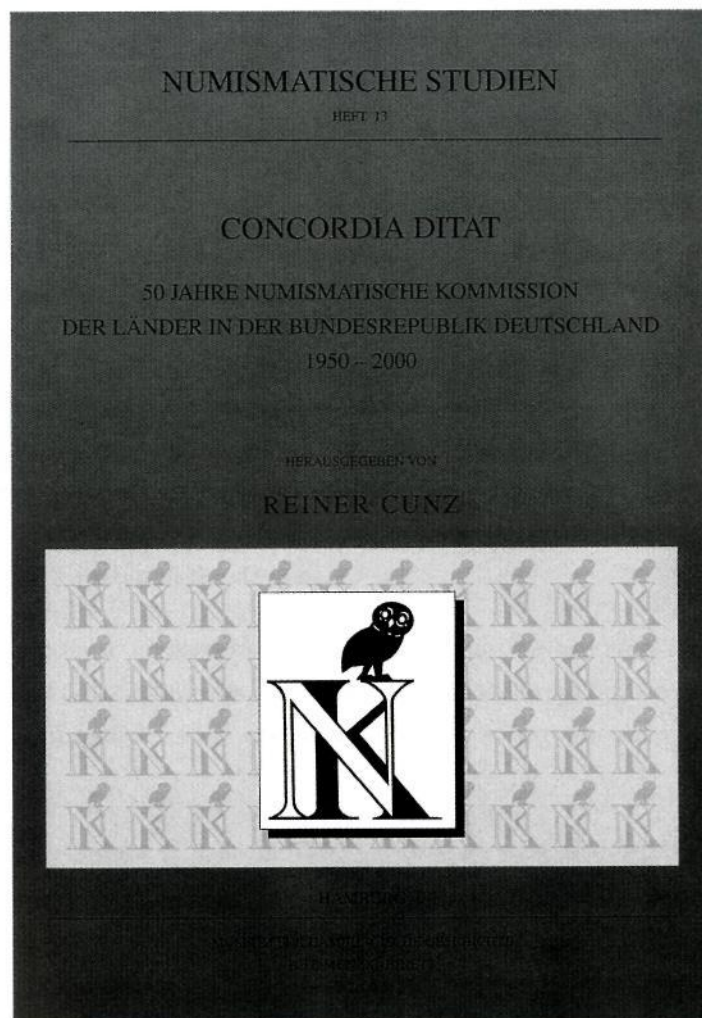
23. Dr. Wolfgang Steguweit  
Staatliche Museen zu  
Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
Münzkabinett  
Bodestraße 1-3  
10178 Berlin  
Landesvertreter Berlin

24. Dr. Ralf Wiechmann  
Museum für Hamburgische  
Geschichte  
Münzkabinett  
Holstenwall 24  
20355 Hamburg  
Landesvertreter Freie und Hansestadt  
Hamburg



**Figura 1.** a/b, scale 1:1.

**Figura 2.**



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **Cunz 2000a**

CUNZ, R. (editor), *CONCORDIA  
DITAT, 50 Jahre Numismatische  
Kommission der Länder in der  
Bundesrepublik Deutschland  
1950-2000*, (Hamburg, 2000)  
(Numismatische Studien, 13)

### **Cunz 2000b**

CUNZ, R., «50. Gründungsjubiläum  
der Numismatischen Kommission»  
in *Numismatisches Nachrichtenblatt*,  
49, (2000), pp.316-318

### **Cunz 2000c**

CUNZ, R., «Festakt zur 50-Jahrfeier  
der Numismatischen Kommission»  
in *Geldgeschichtliche Nachrichten*,  
35, (2000), pp.362-363

### **Kaufhold 2000**

KAUFHOLD, K.H., «Numismatik  
und Wirtschafts-geschichte» in  
*Numismatisches Nachrichtenblatt*,  
49, (2000), pp.215-216 (summary).  
[The enlarged version of the  
lecture will be published in  
Jahrbuch der historischen  
Forschung, 2001].

### **NNB 2000**

*Numismatisches Nachrichtenblatt*,  
49, (2000), no. 6 (50  
Jahre Numismatische Kommission),  
pp.207-216.