

Reading provenance and Accession book information in the Münzkabinett's collection

In accordance with privacy policy, private individuals who were previous owners of our objects are only named if the accession took place at least 70 years ago, i.e. currently up to 1945. Exceptions from this rule are purchases and transfers by public institutions such as State Banks and Ministries, as well as acquisitions from contemporary medalists (entries regarding the latter are already online at www.medaillenkunst.de). Vendors - in most cases commercial coin dealers and auction houses - are always referred to.

The accession no. (not to be confused with a unique inventory / object no.) is given as 'year/ no.' or 'year/ collector's name' respectively, e.g. Acc. '1909/241' or '1906 Löbbbecke'. It may therefore refer to a single coin or several thousand from a prominent collection. The year of acquisition is always deducible from the year given in the Acc.-no.

In contrast to this annually reset formula, from 1839 to 1870 the Münzkabinett's ancient coins accession book counted acquisitions from '1' in 1839 to a final total of 28,965 in 1870. From this point onwards the accession no. was set to '1' with each new year. After WWII and the (temporary) loss of the collection in 1946, yet another new accession book was begun, which also started with '1' in 1946 and closed with 'Acc. 1958/8925'.

As until 1868 the Münzkabinett administratively was subdivided into a collection of ancient coins on the one hand, and one of medieval /modern coins and medals on the other, up to this date a dedicated Accession book for the latter department was also used in which Acc. nos. read '1823 fol. 8,1 (MA Inv.)' respectively '1858/339-1 (MA Inv.)', for example.

As the earliest coin collection of the Brandenburg Electorate originated from the Kunst- und Antiquitätenkammer (Art Chamber), there is also an older accession book covering the period from 1688 to 1713/1730, again providing accession year and page (folio).

Objects, which were purchased before 1839 (the inauguration of the first modern accession book) bear the Acc. no. 'Alter Bestand (vor 1839)' = Ancient Holdings (prior to 1839), unless more detailed information on provenance is provided. These objects, which are already mentioned in Lorenz Beger's *Thesaurus Brandenburgicus*, vol. 1-3 of 1696/1701, or can be identified as accessioned in this period on the basis of other sources, are labelled 'Alter Bestand (vor 1700)'.

Acc. '1685 Pfälzer Sammlung' refers to the Palatinate Elector's collection at Heidelberg, which was bequeathed to the Elector of Brandenburg in 1685 (see Beger's *Thesaurus Palatinus*).

Acc. '1791 Ansbach' identifies the collection of the last Markgraf of Brandenburg-Ansbach from Bayreuth, which was purchased by the Prussian king in 1791.

Due to the confiscation of the collection by the Russian army and its deportation into the USSR in 1945, during and subsequent to transport a great deal of disorder was experienced, often enough resulting in the loss of coin tickets and provenance information. After the fortunate and unexpected return our holdings (minus the library) to the GDR government in 1958, it took almost 30 years to reorganize the collection and reconstruct provenances, although for several objects the relevant information was unfortunately still lost. In such cases objects now bear the Acc. 'Ohne Nummer' (= no number). Thanks to inventories which provide total numbers of coins/medals of certain types held at certain period in time, in most cases an acquisition prior to WWI is most likely. This is in particular so in cases of prominent and precious objects once exhibited in the 'new' permanent galleries of the Kaiser Friedrich-Museum (now Bode-Museum) dedicated to the Münzkabinett, which opened in 1904.

K. Dahmen, April 2nd 2015