

# NI Bulletin

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Welcome to the first issue of 2019 wherein we start the year with interesting articles on various subjects. First off we have Hugo Vanhoudt whose book *The Coins of the Burgundian, Spanish and Austrian Low Countries and of the French and Dutch Periods, 1434-1830* was reviewed in this magazine (Nov/Dec 2016) writes specifically about the Golden Fleece countermark which concerns Spanish and Spanish American coins validated for use in Europe. Next we have David Wolfer who addresses the mystery of the Martinique half-moco, a rarity so great it may be unknown; read on for the fruit of his research. As we see the first two articles are about countermarks, a subject which in my opinion is gaining interest with collectors but problematically is also blemished by counterfeits including contemporary, “old” and modern. Let’s hope these and other such minded researchers and specialists can make progress ferreting out counterfeits. The Netherlands is currently celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Synod of Dort which theologically, historically and for the Dutch nation is very significant. Paul Oostervink wrote about the commemorative medals issued in 1619 for delegates to the synod (see *NI Bulletin*, January/February 2017) and now writes about the new commemorative medal. Robert Ronus presents three talers missing in Davenport and along with beautiful images of coins from large collections. Mike Davis writes about a 20th century variety from Israel. I hope you enjoy your bulletin.

Your editor, staff and board of governors all wish you the best for 2019.

*Herman Blanton*

## Commemorative Medal, 400 Year Synod of Dordrecht 400 Year Reformation – Ode to the Synod

Paul Oostervink, NI #2787

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From November 10, 2018, to May 29, 2019 Dordrecht or Dordt as it was referred to in English at the time celebrates under the name Ode to the Synod. The celebration is to last 180 days which corresponds to the Synod at that time and precisely 400 years later. Dordrecht publicizes the importance of the Synod with programs aimed for a wide audience. Inhabitants, cultural and ecclesiastical institutions organize many activities such as exhibitions, conferences, films, concerts, lectures and debates, theatre, walking tours, murals and different special cultural projects.

The municipality of Dordrecht commissioned a contest among local professional visual artists for the design of a contemporary Synod medal. From 15 entries the jury chose the design of Theun Okkerse (born Dordrecht, 1954). He designed a Synod medal in which past and present come together, inspired by the original medal that back then, in 1619, was handed out to all participants.



**Figure 1**  
**Gold Triumph medal of the Synod of Dordrecht – 1619<sup>1</sup>**  
**The Synod in session**

Gold, 119.56 g, 12 h, diameter 58.6 mm. Medallist: Willem van Bylaer. Designer: François Schillemans / Daniel Heinsius. Technique: struck. Obverse inscription [rose] × ASSERTA • × • RELIGIONE × (the religion assured). Reverse inscription: [rose] × ERVNT × VT × MONS × SION × CIO × IO × CXIX × (they shall be as Mount Zion, 1619). Dordrechts Museum, Collection Huis van Gijn, Dordrecht,<sup>2</sup> Nr. 4375. Reference: v. Loon II, p. 105.

In 1618/1619 Dordrecht was for six months the center of Europe. More than a hundred professors, politicians and pastors from home and abroad, came together for a unique church meeting in Dordrecht: the Synod of Dordrecht.



**Figure 2**

**Commemorative medal design 400 Year Synod of Dordrecht by Theun Okkerse<sup>3</sup>**

Theun Okkerse designed his medal with a look at the heavenly and earthly. We see a group of men in early 17th-century costumes in conversation while some women look on. They regard the heavenly and act accordingly by the name of God in Hebrew letters among them. The point of view is from the bottom, as if we look through a glass ceiling. This transparent oval is also on the reverse of the medal, but now is the view from the sky facing down where Dordrecht situated across the water.

After the opening in the Augustinian Church and the start of the program “Ode to the Synod” on November 10, 2018, King Willem-Alexander received the first gold commemorative medal 400 Year Synod of Dordrecht.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 3**

**Commemorative Medal 400 Year Synod of Dordrecht Gold 585/000, 59 g, 45 mm, thickness about 3 mm. Edge: smooth.**

Designer: Theun Okkerse. Medallist: Lei Lennaerts. Technique: struck. Client: municipality of Dordrecht and the Dordrechts Museum. Obverse image: from below a

transparent oval with a group of men in early 17th-century costumes, in conversation while some women look on. Worn by the name of God in Hebrew letters among them. Above the coat of arms of the Republic of the United Netherlands and under the coat of arms of Dordrecht. Obverse inscription: SYNODE van DORDRECHT 1618 ' 19 – coat of arms – 2018 ' 19 (SYNOD OF DORDRECHT 1618 ' 19 -coat of arms- 2018 ' 19) Reverse image: from above in transparent oval Dordrecht on the water. Reverse inscription: IDENTITEIT / TAAL / GASTVRIJHEID/ DORDRECHT (Identity/ Language/ Hospitality/ Dordrecht).

Of the commemorative medal 3 Gold copies were struck, 25 Silver (835/000, 40 g, 45 mm, thickness about 3 mm) and 500 Bronze (37 g, 45 mm, thickness about 3 mm). The second gold copy was intended for the Dordrechts Museum and the third for a private collection. Hereinafter the King initiated on the square of Het Hof of the Netherlands a symbolic robotic arm to decoratively (calligraphy) write the States Bible over the nine month period.



**Figure 4**  
**Robotarm**

An important decision taken in the Synod was to officially order a translation of the Bible into Dutch from the original Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek languages. After years of translation work the first *Statenbijbel* (States Bible) was printed in 1637.

To honor the fourth centennial of the Synod, the German art collective “Robotlab” programmed a robot that will write out the complete biblical text of the *Statenvertaling* (States Translation). Just like a monk in a scriptorium who transcribes each individual character, the robot writes in calligraphy over three million letters in real ink on a roll of paper of more than 1000 meters length.

With its task [bible] in bios<sup>5</sup> the robot stands between human handwriting and mechanical production of the printing press. This art installation uses writing to combine religion and scientific rationalism. It raises questions concerning belief and

technological progress and thus focuses on the connection of two cultural systems that are fundamental to society.

Further that day the King opened in the Dordrechts Museum the exhibition *Work, Pray & Admire*.<sup>6</sup> A new perspective on art and Calvinism by a special Bible with the Royal Bibles that are part of the exhibition. *Work, Pray & Admire* shows the relationship between Calvinism and art in a broad context. In addition to paintings of Bol, Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Mondriaan it regards literature, music and Church architecture. This exhibition is part of the program with many other initiatives *Ode to the Synod*.

Special thanks to Lei Lennaerts and Geesken Bloemendal – ter Horst for the help and cooperation.

<sup>1</sup> *NI Bulletin*, Volume 52 Nos. 1 / 2, January/February 2017, “The National Synod of Dordrecht-1619,” pp. 3-12.

<sup>2</sup> Dordrechts Museum, Collection Huis van Gijn, Dordrecht. Photo with permission of the Dordrechts Museum.

<sup>3</sup> Theun Okkerse, Dordrecht. Photo with permission. The bronze medal is for sale at the Dordrechts Museum ([info@dordrechtmuseum.nl](mailto:info@dordrechtmuseum.nl)). De Grote Kerk of Dordrecht (<https://www.grotekerk-dordrecht.nl>), Het Hof van Nederland (<https://www.hethofvannederland.nl>) and Tourist Office VVV Dordrecht (<https://www.vvvdordrecht.nl>), all sites accessed November 25, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The medal is included in the Koninklijke Verzamelingen (Royal Collections) of the Noordeinde Palace in The Hague. <http://www.koninklijkeverzamelingen.nl/en/>

<sup>5</sup> Bios means Basic Input/Output System, the first vital operating system that begins to work when a computer is being started up. Photo with permission. <https://www.synode400.nl>

<sup>6</sup> Dordrechts Museum, exhibition ‘work, pray and admire,’ a new perspective on art & Calvinism (November 11, 2018 - May 26, 2019). <https://www.dordrechtmuseum.nl/tentoonstellingen/werkbidbewonder>

All web sites in these notes accessed November 25, 2018.

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## NI

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### Errors and Corrections

In the previous edition (November/December 2018, Vol. 53, Nos. 11/12) the article “British Countermarks on French Silver Coins, Merchant Countermarked Silver Coins in Great Britain c. 1780-1830” by Eric C. Hodge, there is an error at p. 180, par. 6, reproduced below.

There are twenty seven examples of this countermark known from photographic evidence, from *l’an* 5 (1796/7) to 1813, and all are on French 5 francs, eight being from the Republican era (Figure 1) and the other twenty from the Napoleonic period (Figures 3, 6 & 8).

The author sends this correction: *On page 180 of my article, 6th paragraph I state there are 27 known, 8 Republican and 20 Napoleonic. The total of 27 is correct. The split should be 6 Republican and 21 Napoleonic.*

