



# Origins of the German Coin Trade: The Hamburger and Schlessinger Families

A German-Jewish story  
of the fortunate rise and tragic end of the most important  
coin trading dynasty before the Second World War



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By Ursula Kampmann, translated by Rachel Agard



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# A greeting by Dr Klein on the occasion of the auction of the Salton Collection

With the auction of the Lottie and Mark Salton collection, the numismatic world will experience a special highlight this year. Many valuable coins will find new owners. As always, the coins being auctioned tell stories about the times in which they were minted, documenting much turbulence and upheaval in the world. It is precisely such changes that Lottie and Mark Salton had to experience in their lives. Their story does not fit on any coin, but would fill books.

Persecuted as Jews in Germany, they lost members of their families during the Shoah. They managed to escape and found a new home, and each other, in the USA. However, they never lost contact with their old homeland. It should fill us Germans with humility, and is a testament to the couple's magnanimity, that they made a provision in their wills to auction off part of their collection in Germany.

Each of the three institutions that will receive the proceeds from this auction fulfills an important purpose in its own right, keeping the memory of the Shoah alive and working for a tolerant society – just like the Salton couple, both of whom we will continue to honour in memory.

Berlin, January 2022



Dr Felix Klein



*Dr Felix Klein*

*Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life  
in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism*



Federal Government Commissioner  
for Jewish Life in Germany and  
the Fight against Antisemitism

# In memory of Mark and Lottie Salton of New York



*Fritz Rudolf Künker,  
Founder*

It was in December of 1985, on the occasion of the New York International Numismatic Convention, that I first met Mark Salton. We quickly engaged in conversation and a friendship developed from this first contact, as it did with his wife Lottie, who came from the Westphalian town of Wünnenberg near Paderborn. Lottie and Mark had met in New York in 1946 and married in 1948.

Mark M. Salton-Schlessinger, as he still called himself in the 1950s, was born in Frankfurt/Main on 12 January 1914, the eldest son of Felix Schlessinger (born 18 February 1879) and his wife Hedwig, née Feuchtwanger (born 22 September 1891), both murdered in Auschwitz on 25 October 1944. Like his grandfather, the son was given the name Max; he was the scion of an old Jewish family that was active in the banking industry. The Schlessingers were closely related to the Hamburger family, and when the younger Leo Hamburger (1846-1929) lost his only son Siegmund to suicide in 1904, he won over his nephew Felix Schlessinger a short time later as a potential successor to the world-famous Leo Hamburger coin dealership in Frankfurt.

When Felix Schlessinger married Hedwig Feuchtwanger in 1911, his uncle Leo Hamburger made him a partner in the firm.

Max Schlessinger (later Mark Salton) was only a few months old when the First World War broke out at the end of July 1914. Felix Schlessinger was required to take part in the war as a soldier from the first to the last day: He was deployed on the Western Front in the hell of Verdun, and was awarded the Iron Cross. He suffered severe wounds and survived only by a miracle.

After the First World War, Felix Schlessinger returned to Frankfurt/Main to work again in the company of his uncle Leo Hamburger. As a result of the severe inflation of 1923 the company began to decline, and Felix Schlessinger ventured a new start in Berlin in 1928. Max Schlessinger was at that time 14 years old and his younger brother Paul (born 11 January 1918) was ten years old. Max attended the Werner Siemens Realgymnasium secondary school, while his father Felix worked successfully in Berlin-Charlottenburg at Bismarckstraße 97/98.

From 1929 to 1935, the gifted numismatist Felix Schlessinger conducted twelve auctions in Berlin (see Künker Auction 357, p. 423 ff). The Jewish population in Germany suffered increasingly repressive measures from 1933 onwards, and as a result the Schlessinger family emigrated to the Netherlands in 1936 in order to continue working in the coin trade.

Thus a new start was made in Amsterdam at Prinsengracht 101, and two more auctions were held. However, the occupation of the Netherlands by the German Wehrmacht in May 1940 dramatically worsened the Schlessingers' situation; their warehouse and library were confiscated. Felix Schlessinger and his wife Hedwig spent two years in the concentration camps Westerbork and Theresienstadt before they were deported on the last train from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz on 23 October 1944, where they were murdered on 25 October 1944. Their sons Max and Paul were able to flee from the Nazis. Paul went to Israel, and Max Schlessinger, after a long odyssey as a refugee through Europe, began a new life in New York in 1946 under the name Mark Salton. He began his career as a banker in the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, one of the largest banks in New York at the time.

Mark Salton completed evening studies at New York University, graduating with a Master's degree in International Banking. He soon became a member of the management team at his bank.

The passion for numismatics had driven Mark Salton throughout his life. He eventually bought back most of his father's library, which had been unlawfully confiscated in Amsterdam, from antiquarians.

He always told me with pride that with his salary as a bank director he could afford to buy large coin collections in the 1950s and 1960s, in both the USA and Europe, but especially in his new home New York City. Mark Salton pursued a double strategy in doing so: On the one hand, he wanted to build up his own collection for himself and his wife, which he inventoried in detail and numbered. On the other hand, there were also many pieces that he sold because they did not meet his high standards.

Also impressive are the little notes, written on a typewriter, which he enclosed with numerous coins. Provenances, which are so much in the foreground today, hardly played a role for Mark Salton. And if there are references to specific occurrences on his slips of paper, they usually involve pieces from the same series to which he is referring, but not those pieces to which they are attached.

Sales from a dealership's own stock played a much bigger role for the coin trade in earlier times than did auctions, as Jacques Schulman told me as late as the mid-1970s. Mark Salton sold as a dealer all the pieces he chose not to integrate into his personal collection, or he consigned them to auctions.

When we became friends in the late 1980s, Mark also regularly consigned coins to Osnabrück for the Künker auctions. Usually there was one particularly interesting coin and a small number of less interesting pieces accompanying it. When I once called him and tried to explain that I was only interested in the special pieces for our auctions, he told me in his humorous way: "Mr. Künker, you can't just eat schnitzel, the meal also includes the potatoes."

Mark Salton often remembered Germany nostalgically; he especially regretted that he had, as he put it, discarded his good German name Max Schlessinger in the USA and adopted the name Mark Salton.

Osnabrück, January 2022



Fritz Rudolf Künker

Mark and Lottie Salton's extremely friendly relationship with the House of Künker led them to also involve Fritz Rudolf Künker in the dissolution of their magnificent life's work. Dr Ursula Kampmann has put together a history of the Hamburger and Schlessinger families in a work which will be published by the Fritz Rudolf Künker numismatic publishing entity. We thank Ursula Kampmann for this special work, and all others who have contributed to it. On their behalf, we would like to especially thank our colleague Frau Alexandra Elflein-Schwieger, who following the death of Mark Salton on 31 December 2005 took care of his wife Lottie in a most touching manner, and made sure that the memory of Lottie's family the Aronsteins was kept alive.

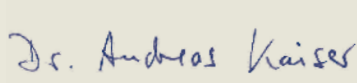
At the end of Ursula Kampmann's work, a post-scriptum notably recorded the following:

"It is a great honour for the House of Künker that Lottie and Mark Salton have stipulated in their will that their important numismatic collection should be auctioned jointly in New York and Osnabrück by the American auction house Stack's Bowers Galleries and by Künker."

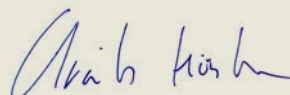
We pay respectful tribute to the lifetime achievement of these friends, who had lost everything, and are humbly grateful for the trust placed in us. May the auction of the Lottie and Mark Salton collection be another sign of reconciliation.



Fritz Rudolf Künker



Dr. Andreas Kaiser



Ulrich Künker

# Reflections upon a coin and its owner – my memories of Lottie Salton

by Alexandra Elflein-Schwier



Alexandra Elflein-Schwier

My first encounter with Lottie Salton took place in New York in the early 2000s. A petite, reserved older lady with alert eyes came to the coin stand and addressed me in German in a low voice. She enquired politely about the current state of the market, examined attentively the coins in the display case, and told me that she had amassed a collection of coins and medals with her beloved husband Mark, born Max Mordechai Schlessinger, until his death in 2005. We kept in touch and in the years that followed I learned of her life, relative to numismatics, but also of the terror and suffering she had faced. Much of her own family and Mark's family had been systematically disenfranchised, persecuted and murdered by the Nazis in Germany. She drew my attention powerfully to the fact that I am lucky to have been born at a later time.

Lottie continued to own property in Bad Wünnenberg, Germany, until her death in April 2020. Her hometown is not far from Osnabrück, so I went there to take photos for her: of her childhood home, of the place where she grew up, and of the gravestones of her grandparents Henriette and Levi Aronstein. During their lifetimes, Lottie's grandparents were known and appreciated in Wünnenberg for their charitable work. In addition to their nine children, they had also taken in two orphans. After the war Lottie's parents, the horse trader Paul Aronstein and his wife Adele, had succeeded in getting back at least their own pasture land. In New York they lived from, among other sources, the modest rent this property brought in. Lottie wished she could have seen it all again. She referred me to Gertrud Tölle of Bad Wünnenberg, who wrote the impressive book *We Were Neighbours* ("Wir waren Nachbarn")<sup>1</sup>. Among other subjects the book deals with the lives and fate of the last remaining Jewish family in Wünnenberg, the Aronsteins. Only a few of Lottie Salton's relatives survived the National Socialist terror. On the back of one of her family photos, Lottie recorded the names of the people pictured in typewriter script, followed by their respective fates. Against most of those names was the word "murdered"!

In that story, the world of 13-year-old Lottie falls apart at an early age. Her grandfather Salomon Pollack, from nearby Rüthen, flees to his death in 1937 after being publicly ridiculed and deprived of his rights. The family breaks up. Her uncle Adolf Pollak and her aunt Henriette emigrate to the USA in 1938 to escape anti-Jewish harassment. At school in Wünnenberg, Lottie Aronstein is increasingly humiliated by her teacher. Lottie's father Paul, a survivor of the First World War after being shot in the head, is informed in writing "... by the Nazi authorities in 1938 that as a Jew he was no longer entitled to hold this decoration awarded to him for his bravery in the battles at Verdun, and that he must hand over the Iron Cross to the local group leader within 24 hours." The name of her uncle Eduard – also a recipient of the Iron Cross – who died in the First World War, is publicly removed by the National Socialists from the war memorial near her school. Shortly before Lottie's fourteenth birthday on 10 November

1938, her "... father was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp in a sealed cattle car." Mother and children are left unprotected, and the very next day a group of thugs from the town of Fürstenberg arrive to publicly destroy the Aronstein family's belongings directly before the eyes of the villagers. Adele Aronstein and her children Lottie and Erich find neither a sympathetic ear nor a refuge with their neighbours. Destitute, they flee to relatives in Bremen. Mother and children separate two months later, and for the two youngest children a humiliating, fearful period of flight and persecution across Europe begins, during which they "... unfortunately met only a few good people." After internment in various camps from Belgium to southern France, the children receive a postcard from their father in the Gurs prison camp via the Red Cross. At the risk of their lives, they both manage to get to their father Paul, in the St. Cyprien camp. With the help of relatives from the USA, the three embark on the ship "Monte Viso" in April 1940. At this point the refugees think they are safe, but the ship is stopped off Casablanca and they are taken to the Casbah Tadla camp in the Sahara. Once again they endure bitter hunger, thirst, heat, cold, illness, humiliation, deprivation of rights, destitution and fear of death. After some months, they manage to escape and, with the help of others, are given passage anew on a Spanish ship. "... On 14 August 1941, after two years and eight months of this terrible odyssey..." they finally set foot "... on American soil for the first time", about which Ms Salton is to later write: "It is impossible to describe the feelings of freedom and happiness we felt at that moment." In her letter to a Wünnenberg school class in 1994, Lottie wrote: "I... have tried to put down on paper a rough outline of our fate during the dark years 1933 to 1942. Although all of this happened a long time ago, before you were born, the memory of the horrors of persecution is still difficult to overcome. We can only hope that the Lord will spare us all such severe trials and keep us, imperfect as we humans are, in peace and righteousness. And above all, that He will not let us forget that He created us in His image (Genesis, Chapter 1, verse 27)."

Lottie Salton and I developed a personal, friendly bond over the years. Coins sometimes seem to bring people together in a special way. Lottie's husband, Mark, writes in his memoirs that during his time in Berlin (1928-1936) many coin collectors became family friends, and came and went in the Schlessinger home. Some of these important contacts helped his own family to emigrate to the Netherlands in 1936, to make a new start in Amsterdam, and supported the two children Max and Paul in their escape in 1940. Many of these same friends and companions later fell victim to the National Socialists themselves.

In his own memoirs, Mark Salton (Max M. Schlessinger) also describes vividly the environment in which he grew up, in which numismatics was the linchpin and livelihood of the family. His father Felix was successful in the coin trade, possessing the numismatic knowledge, the necessary contacts and the negotiating skill to bring even the most difficult negotiations

to a good conclusion. Mark particularly remembers his father's grueling negotiations at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin for his Auction 13 of the Collection of Greek Museum Coins (Hermitage, Leningrad) with 1655 numbers, which took place in 1935. Mark's mother, Hedwig Schlessinger (née Feuchtwanger) spoke fluent English, French and Italian, and wrote most of the elaborate handwritten company correspondence. It is not surprising that Mark was determined to become a numismatist himself: "... Although I had decided at a young age to follow into Father's numismatic footsteps, my parents felt that this should be preceded by a formal education not confined to numismatics. Little did I realize then, how essential their wisdom would prove in later years."

A glance at the present collection shows unmistakably that the banker Mark Salton simultaneously remained a lifelong numismatist. From now on, others may enjoy this life's work and, with a purchase from the collection, support the cause that was so close to Mark and Lottie Salton's hearts, never losing sight of our common humanity.

Mark and Lottie led a modest, very secluded life in New York, where only a few people were able to gain their trust. However, they did not forget all of those who were loyal companions to them. Their donations, too went to charitable, humanitarian institutions. They, who experienced so much inhumanity in their lives, demonstrated with their life's work not only great numismatic stature, but also great human stature.

In addition, both Lottie and Mark collected medals. They did so not only because the market had forgotten such medals for many years, as Mark writes in his memoirs, but also because of "their aesthetic qualities as for the humanistic message they convey". Mark and Lottie themselves now send one of the greatest imaginable humanistic messages to the world with their legacy.

For many years, this collection with its accompanying stories from two lives was hidden, and it is wonderful that both are now to see the light of day.

The italicised text passages here are original or translated quotes from Lottie and Mark Salton's memoirs. It is well worth letting Mark and Lottie speak for themselves by reading their memoirs in the original.

Osnabrück, January 2022

# Family tree of the Hamburger and Schlessinger families

## Jantuf

ca. 1730 – 12.06.1804

## Loeb

ca. 1761 – 19.10.1835

∞ Zerle Schwab

## Joseph

1801 – 18.05.1866

∞ Dorchen Cahn

### Leo ●

1.06.1836 – 22.2.1902

∞ Caroline Gütel Rothschild

### Mathias

17.12.1837 – ?

### Julius

15.9.1839 – ?

### Adolph ●

1.11.1841 – 16.9.1919

### Rechav

21.6.1844 – 16.8.1921

∞ Adolf Oppenheimer

### Auguste

16.3.1846 – ?

∞ Leopold Hirschmann

### Caecilie

19.11.1871 – 19.3.1943

∞ Isaak Loeb Goldschmidt

### Joseph ●

11.9.1874 – 1926

### Dora Tirza

20.4.1876 – 1939

∞ Siegmund Rosenbaum

### Tila

11.2.1878 – ?

### Selma

8.3.1880 – ?

∞ Dr. Hermann Hansbach

### David

27.6.1881 – ?

### Rosalie

11.7.1874 – 30.10.1939

∞ Ing. Ernst Wachtel

### Gustav

13.6.1875 – 4.3.1942

∞ Julie Beer

### Karoline

2.9.1876 – 21.7.1911

∞ Dr. Leopold Hausmann

### Anna

1.2.1877 – 31.1.1920

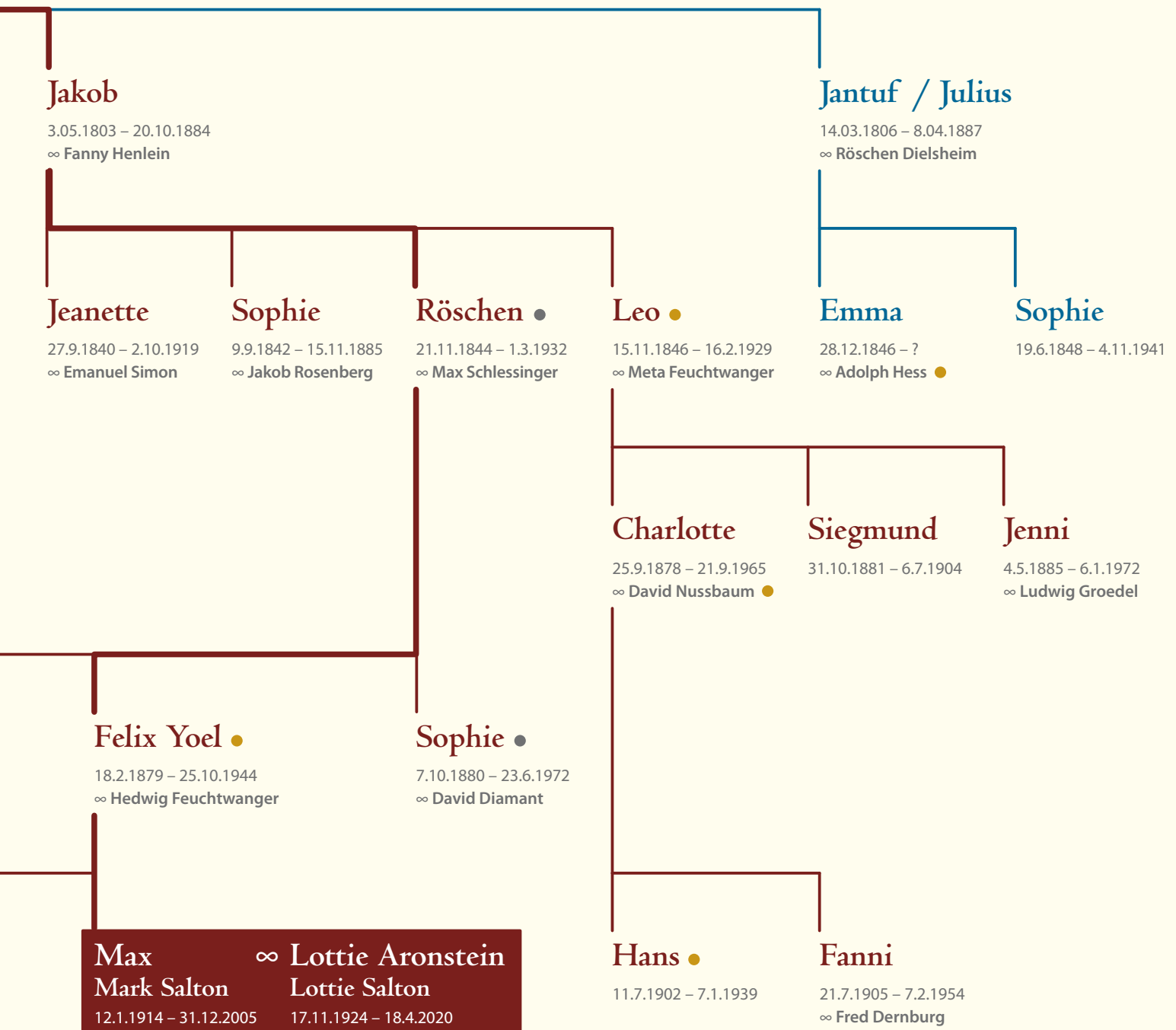
∞ Leo Eschwege

## Paul Elchanan

11.1.1918 – 10.7.2001

∞ Dr. Ruth Lev Ari Loewenhertz

- Coin Dealer
- Author of Memoires





*Mark and Lottie Salton.*

*A photograph from 2001. Photo: Ira Rezak.*

**Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.**

*George Santayana*

London, 134 New Bond Street, sometime in the early 1950s. A man and a woman are standing in the tiny antiques shop of Alfred Spero with the beautiful name "Antique and Curio Shoppe." Perhaps the man whispers to his wife that nothing seems to have changed since he last came to London with his father. Perhaps he thinks that his parents might still be alive if his father had decided to move his shop to London in spite of the high commercial rents back then. We don't know. What we do know, because Mark Salton told us so himself in his memoirs, is the fact that he is in Alfred Spero's shop with his young wife Lottie to buy coins and medals.

Alfred Spero probably doesn't call his client Mr. Salton but Max or perhaps Mr. Schlessinger, using a name that is famous in the European coin trade. After all the man who now calls himself

Mark Salton is the last heir of the greatest dynasty in the history of coin trading. His ancestors – members of the Hamburger and Schlessinger families – had been making a living in this trade since the second half of the 19th century. They did it until the National Socialists confiscated their possession and murdered the parents of Max Schlessinger in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Max Schlessinger, who calls himself Mark Salton in the United States, had nothing but his brains, his knowledge, and his tireless hard work to build a new life in a new world – together with his spouse Lottie, née Aronstein. Thanks to a well-paid position at a bank he can afford to start buying coins and medals again. He will even trade with them, continuing his ancestors' tradition. This is how Lottie and Mark Salton prove to themselves every



*The graves of numerous members of the Hamburger family have been preserved in the Jewish cemetery in Hanau. Photo: Wikipedia/Lumpesegg, cc-by 3.0*

the sister of Felix Schlessinger have left behind their memories for us. They paint a picture of everyday Jewish life, especially in 19th-century Germany. Their accounts are so full of life that, reading them, you have the sense that you actually know the people described.

### The Hamburger Family

*“The first person whose life I know a little about, from what others have told me, is my great-grandfather Jantuf, who was born around 1730 and died in 1804.”* This is more or less all that Adolph Hamburger (1841-1919) writes in his undated life story about his devoutly religious great-grandfather. Fortunately, Jantuf’s – or rather, Jom Tow’s – gravestone is also preserved in the Jewish cemetery in Hanau. It tells us that the deceased was

day anew that they have survived, that they at least are able to build a new, a happy life. They start a new coin collection, put together a numismatic library again, live their life day by day and all that in spite of the fact that the National Socialist world had once decided, out of the blue, to exterminate their families – simply because they were Jewish.

We’ll be telling the story (or rather, stories) of the Hamburger, Schlessinger, and Aronstein families. It’s a piece of German history. It is the incredible rise of disadvantaged Jewish families who worked their way up to the center of the middle classes, only to be wiped out after barely a century of equal rights. At the same time, we’ll be reconstructing a chapter in the history of the coin trade that, to this day, is still not known in detail: the Hamburger and Schlessinger families owned the most important German coin dealerships of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is my hope that Mark and Lottie Salton would have enjoyed reading this story. Because, if you could see the identification slips that this couple prepared for their coins, you would understand that their main focus was the pieces’ historical significance. It was highly important to them that the individual fates of members of the Jewish community, in particular, were told; this is illustrated by the fact that one of the three Jewish institutions they considered in their will does precisely this: the Leo Baeck Institute in New York works to document the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry in particular. It’s more than just a happy coincidence that this archive contained the three documents on which a major portion of this text is based. Adolph, the brother of company founder Leo Hamburger (1836-1902), the sister of his younger partner, and



*Grave stone of Jomtow Hamburger. The translation of the Jewish inscription reads: Here rest an honest and upright man, Jomtow, son of the honorable Mister Jakob Hamburg, may God rest his soul. He is a direct descendant of the author of “Tossafot Jom Tow.” His soul rose up to her origins, and his body to its foundation on Tuesday, 3 Tammuz 564 in the minor era. May his soul be bound up in the bond of life. Photo: Helmut Friedrich, courtesy of the Hanauer Geschichtsverein and the Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen.*



Map of the town of Hanau in 1638. At the south-east edge of the old town, the moat between the old town and the new town was filled in to create "Judengasse" ("Jews' Alley"). This street was renamed "Nordstraße" in 1898 to increase the value of the real estate there.



*“Der Bleichgarten”  
 (“Bleaching green”),  
 a painting by Moritz  
 Daniel Oppenheim,  
 which perhaps reflects  
 an authentic place in the  
 ghetto of Hanau.*

But our chronicler doesn’t mention any of this. As far as he is concerned, the Hamburgers are a long-established Hanau family. The first person whose life we hear a bit more about is Adolph’s grandfather, Jantuf’s son Loeb (approx. 1761-1835). And no wonder, since Adolph’s grandmother, Loeb’s widow Zerle, née Schwab (1766-1863), lived in the household of Adolph’s father Joseph.

### Court Factor: Loeb Hamburger

And that brings us to “Hoffaktor” (court factor) Loeb Hamburger. In the Holy Roman Empire, Loeb’s Jewish faith meant that he was part of a dwindling minority. According to some calculations, there were only 12,500 Jewish families living on the territory of the Holy Roman Empire around the mid-18th century, comprising approx. 70,000 people. These Jewish families were concentrated in Hesse, the state in which Hanau is located: they accounted for 3% of the total population. A significant number of them lived – like our court factor Loeb – on Hanau’s Judengasse, now Nordstraße, which had been built at the beginning of the 17th century on the filled-in moat between the old town and the new town. The right-angled street, which measured 200 meters long and contained about 80 houses, could be completely closed off by means of two gates. These gates were also closed on all Christian holidays and Sundays, after this practice was enforced by the Hanau clergy in 1626. In 1806, there were 540 people living on Judengasse. Its oppressive confinement, but also the comfort it afforded, was captured by painter Moritz Daniel Oppenheim in his 1866 cycle entitled *Bilder aus dem altjüdischen Familienleben* (“Scenes from old Jewish family life”). He depicts the festivities held by

the Jewish residents of his hometown of Hanau, but also their everyday lives. Since we don’t have any pictures of the Hamburger family from the 19th century, we are referring instead to Oppenheim’s illustrations.

Hanau’s Judengasse had everything a Jewish family needed in life: a synagogue, a cheder (a religious primary school for young Jewish children), a Talmud school, and a mikveh (a bath for the purpose of ritual washing), not forgetting the Jewish cemetery, which remains there to this day. As a court factor, Loeb belonged to a wealthy minority on Judengasse. After all, throughout Germany, Jewish people were among the poorest section of the population. Even in the late 19th century – i.e., after several decades of economic catch-up – just 2% of all German Jews were considered wealthy. A quarter of

proud to be a direct descendant of the famous rabbi and Talmudist Jom Tow Lipmann ben Nathan ha-Levi Heller (1579-1654), who was himself a disciple of the great Rabbi Löw of Prague, to whom various legends attribute the creation of a golem. Jom Tow Lipmann led the Krakow congregation from 1644 onwards. He also wrote a commentary on the Mishnah, which is read until today.



*Grave stone of Jebuda Loeb Hamburger. The translation of the Jewish inscription reads: Here lies a trustworthy man. His deeds were those of a craftsman. He was wise and upright, the honorable man, the Torani, the community leader, the honorable Mister Jebuda Löb, son of the community leader, the honorable sir Jom Tow Hamburg, may God rest his soul. He conducted his business and the affairs of the community with honesty, chased after peace and grace, set times for studying the Tora with astuteness and prayed with devotion, his soul rose up to its seat on Monday, 26 Tisbri. . . May his soul be bound up in the bond of life. Photo: Helmut Friedrich, courtesy of the Hanauer Geschichtsverein and the Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen.*



*Battle of Hanau. Painting by Horace Vernet. National Gallery, London.*

them – or even a third, according to some estimates – still lived below the poverty line at this point.

And in fact, it was the economic situation of the Jewish population that inspired Christian Wilhelm Dohm to write his widely read work *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (“On the Improvement of the Jews as Citizens”), published in 1781, which marked the beginning of intellectual thought on equal rights for people of the Jewish faith. Just two years later, the play *Nathan der Weise* (“Nathan the Wise”) was performed for the first time. In this moving stage play, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s “Ring Parable” advocated the fundamental equality of all the “religions of the Book” – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Lessing’s character Nathan was based on Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), initiator of the Haskalah, or the “Jewish Enlightenment”. He was considered by many Christian opinion leaders to be living proof that even Jews, who were derided as backward, could find their way into the modern world. And in fact, some people, such as our court factor Loeb, adapted their customs and learned High German in addition to their native language, Western Yiddish. Adolph Hamburger was proud of how perfectly his grandfather had mastered this foreign language, both verbally and, most notably, in writing. But this was also necessary, since it was a legal requirement in Hesse-Kassel for all business correspondence to be carried out in German.

So, what did a court factor actually do? Well, put simply, anything that one could make a business out of. Factors procured goods and loans, handled monetary transactions, and brokered investments. They advised the wealthy upper classes in financial matters and supplied them with their little pleasures: rare coins and antiques, exquisite imports from all over the world, delicacies for the feast, and plenty of hay for the stable. Whatever customers wanted, factors would procure it at their own expense and risk. Those who made it to the very top were granted the title of “Hoffaktor” (court factor).

Adolph Hamburger proudly summarizes his grandfather’s position as follows: “He worked primarily as a *Geldagent* (“money agent”), court factor as they were called at the time, for the Princess of Schauenburg, who was living in Hanau at that time, the aforementioned Herr v. Meyerfeld, and probably others; he was also the principal collector of the Hanau town lottery.”

Loeb Hamburger therefore served some very respectable clients, even if there weren’t any reigning princes among them. Gertrude Falkenstein, the Princess of Schauenburg, Hanau and of Horzowitz was “just” the long-time mistress of Frederick William I, Prince-elector of Hesse-Kassel, who made her his morganatic wife in August 1831 – four years before Loeb Hamburger’s death. “Herr v. Meyerfeld” is probably the lawyer Wilhelm August von Meyerfeld (1759-1834), who began his career in 1784 as a government and court assessor in Hanau, only to rapidly



*Bombardment of the town and the burning outskirts during the withdrawal of the French troops in the night of October 30-31, 1813.*

advance to the position of State and Finance Minister of the Electorate of Hesse-Kassel. He left behind a biography, which does not mention Loeb Hamburger at all, although we know that the latter was largely responsible for organizing the state lottery.

Even at the beginning of the 19th century, court factors still had a bad reputation. They were suspected of amassing excessive wealth at the taxpayer's expense. Adolph Hamburger therefore felt it necessary to defend his grandfather, even decades(!) after his death: *He conducted his business very honorably; after all, he did not leave behind so much that his widow, my grandmother Zerle, could have lived on it frugally.*

And that's despite the fact that Loeb Hamburger had certainly been considered a good match at the time of their marriage. After all, around 1800, he married the recognized belle of Hanau: Zerle Schwab, a close friend of his sister Maerle. He raised three sons with her: Joseph (1801-1866), Jakob (1803-1884), and Jantuf (1806-1887). Despite their strictly Orthodox upbringing, they also received a modern school education at the same time. And that was thanks to Napoleon.

### Equality Under Napoleon

When the Napoleonic troops occupied Hanau on November 3, 1806, all the residents of Judengasse hoped for legal equality. And in fact, by early December, the order was given to tear down the gates of Judengasse and abolish the "Judenleibzoll," a special toll that Jews had been required to pay and which had equated them, in terms of taxation, with cattle. Of course, the

Jewish residents of Hanau celebrated their liberators with solemn services, which led to serious riots on January 6, 1807. Militant opponents of France did not take out their displeasure about the town's oath of homage toward Napoleon on the French troops, but rather on the residents of Judengasse.

In 1810, Hanau became part of the Grand Duchy of Frankfurt, which meant that all its residents could appeal to a constitution that guaranteed freedom of religion, the abolition of all class privileges, and equality before the law, following the French model. But there were some restrictions: the implementing act, passed in February 1811, demanded a large sum of money for the implementation of the new, progressive rights. This sum was raised in Frankfurt, but the Jewish population of Hanau did not have enough money.

Zerle Hamburger told her grandson Adolph about the French occupation, the mixed feelings as the gates of Judengasse were removed, and how strangely it moved

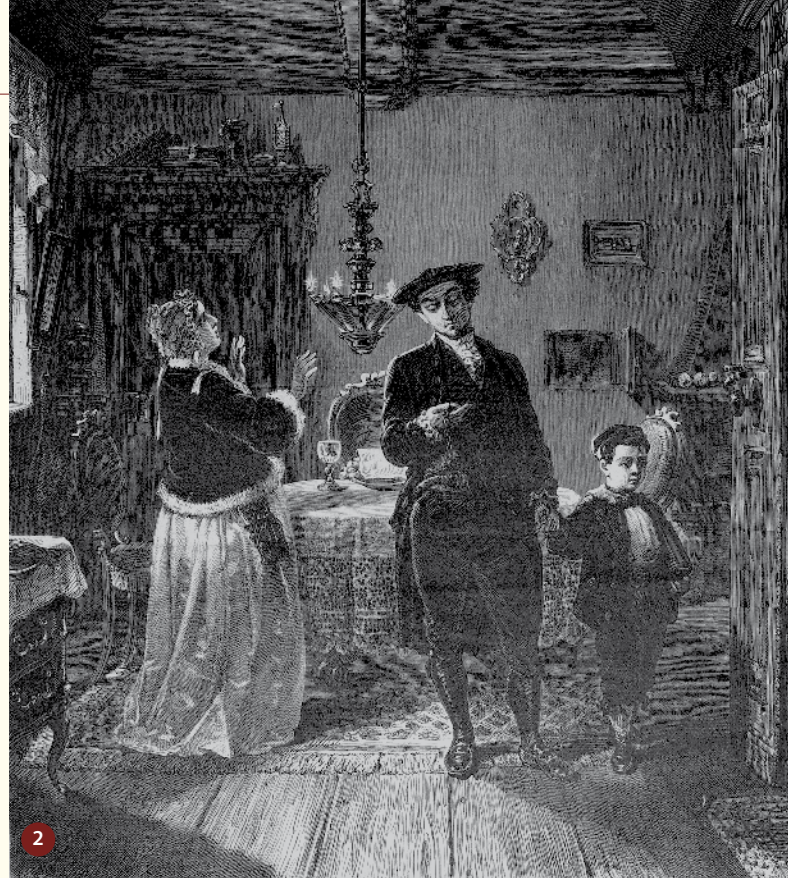
*her when members of the Jewish community were called upon to join the citizens' militia: elderly, honorable men had to learn the drill exercises on the Paradeplatz square.*

Adolph also reports what his father Joseph told him about the Battle of Hanau: *When the residents of Judengasse, through which the army's route led, saw that a battle was going to take place, they barricaded their houses and fled to the cellar with their belongings. Some houses were set alight by projectiles; we did not dare to put the fires out. ... During the fire, the community's elderly rabbi, Moses Tobias Sondheimer ... dashed through the street, which was full of troops, into the synagogue, to take the Torah to the safety of his garden. When the officer of the French troops caught sight of the rabbi in his prayer robe with the Torah scroll, he ordered the troops to halt and present with the words: "Laissez le passer le vénérable rabbi. (= let the venerable rabbi pass)."*

This Rabbi of Hanau who was widely known for his scholarship left us his own account of the French withdrawal, which confirms many details of Adolph Hamburger's recollections: *When morning broke, four thousand French troops came from Gelnhäuser Straße and many of them came as far as Judengasse, but the Bavarians confronted them...for us, the day of rest became a time of grief and sorrow. The joy of the Sabbath was drowned out by the clamor of war ... Near the town, we heard and saw the thunder of cannons from both sides. Fear and terror consumed us, we didn't know what to do... Cannonballs fell on Judengasse, one onto the house of the shepherd and prayer leader, shattering windows and stoves, and many into other houses and places. When we saw these dangers, we fled to the cellars.*



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- 1 The rabbi checks in his study to see whether his student has learned the lesson. Beside him sits his daughter, who has already prepared the fruit that will be the student's reward if he is successful. Engraving by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.
- 2 A father and son in the festively lit Sabbath room, waiting for the Sabbath to begin; in the background, the table is laid with Sabbath bread (barches) and wine goblets for the kiddush, a blessing. Engraving by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.
- 3 The Sabbath rest observed by a humble family who have settled on Judengasse. Note the high value that the book itself holds in this social class. Engraving by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.
- 4 The Sabbath rest observed by a middle-class family, as we must imagine it was observed in the Hamburger household. Engraving by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.
- 5 An Orthodox marriage ceremony. Engraving by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.

And so did the Hamburger family. But Joseph, who was twelve years old at the time, sneaked unnoticed up to the first floor of the house to watch the exciting action. This nearly cost him his life: *A French soldier spotted him, aimed his weapon at him, and shouted that they would shoot him and destroy his house if he did not stop and let them open the door. He had to comply; they brought in a wounded French officer and moved on. The family then cared for this man for a long time, burned his uniform, and pretended he was a relative to save him from being captured as a prisoner of war. My father told me that he learned a lot of French from him.*

In fact, around 10,000 fleeing French troops – mostly wounded – fell into enemy hands. The Bavarian General Carl Philipp von Wrede recaptured Hanau. The town was occupied by Russian troops. Adolph shares a few anecdotes: *Nobody dared to approach them in boots; if you did, they would simply say: "Sit down, comrade," and take your boots off. In return, the entire town of Hanau amused itself over the fact that the Cossacks praised everything they were given to eat – including a bowl of wallpaper paste.*

On November 21, 1813, the Prince-electoral of Hesse returned. He repealed the French laws and reinstated the old constitution. This had very real consequences for Loeb's sons, who attended the town's secondary school – a first for Jewish children: *In the first few years ... inwardly, neither Jews nor Christians were ready to reconcile ... And in 1813, when the prince-electoral returned, he acted in accordance with his well-known saying: everything will remain as we left it in 1807. They could not put the ghetto gates back up, but the few families that had settled outside were regarded with suspicion; you can imagine how unpleasant the situation was for the young Jewish boys who attended the secondary school at the time.*

Nonetheless, William I, Prince-electoral of Hesse, commanded his Jewish subjects to go to war against the French. Some volunteers also stepped forward on Hanau's Judengasse, which the prince-electoral would reward with some concessions in 1816.

### Three Brothers – Three Different Paths to the Center of German Society

Loeb and Zerle Hamburger made great financial sacrifices to ensure that their sons received an excellent education. They also made sure that they didn't put all their eggs in one basket. Once the three boys had learned Hebrew and gained a basic understanding of the Talmud, they were sent to Hanau's secondary school. After completing their studies there, Jakob,



*Return of the Volunteer from the Wars of Liberation.*  
Painting by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim from 1833/4.

the second-oldest, attended the rabbinical college in Würzburg, while Julius, the youngest, studied law in Marburg. This was far-sighted of Loeb Hamburger, since Jewish lawyers were not yet allowed to open their own practice at that time.

At the age of 14, Joseph, the oldest son, was sent to Fürth near Nuremberg, where he worked as an apprentice at the Wikersheim brothers' wholesale company. He brought some excellent skills to the table: he spoke German, French, English, Italian, and of course Hebrew. He was funny and quick-witted, and his open, pragmatic manner went down well with business partners. But his day-to-day work must have been a struggle: Adolph tells us how his father would stuff his shoes with straw at the winter trade fairs in Munich to avoid getting frostbite. After 10 successful years of work for the Wikersheim brothers, Joseph went to Paris, where he hoped to find a promising position. He failed. Nevertheless, the theaters and museums of Paris remained some of his fondest memories throughout his life. After his return, Joseph took over management of the Offenbach branch of the Frankfurt-based wholesale company W. M. Schuster & Sohn. Since Frankfurt had not joined the "Zollverein" (German Customs Union), many Frankfurt trading companies owned a branch in Greater Hesse in order to avoid unnecessary formalities and customs duties. In contrast to Frankfurt, there had been a customs union in place between Prussia and Offenbach since 1828.

At this point, if not earlier, Joseph probably started looking for a wife, whose dowry he desperately needed in order to establish himself economically. After all, until well into the 19th century, marriage was not a matter of romance, but rather an economic



*On the first Sabbath after his 13th birthday, a Jewish boy recites an excerpt from the Torah in the synagogue as a sign of his maturity before the law. This event is traditionally celebrated with a great feast — as depicted in this image — where the family serves the neighbors lots of delicious food. The Hamburger family discussed whether they should forgo the bar mitzvah celebrations for financial reasons, but they decided against it. They didn't want to rob their sons of this fond memory. Engraving by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.*

arrangement. Of course, there were exceptions. For example, Julius, the youngest of the three Hamburger brothers, refused to fulfill his parents' wishes, and instead insisted on marrying his childhood sweetheart, the penniless Röschen Dielsheim. The couple had to wait for 13 years, because Julius was not earning enough to support a family. Although he had successfully completed his studies, he was not allowed to practice law in his own name, since Jewish lawyers were not granted a license to do so until 1833. But as soon as Jewish lawyers were allowed to be licensed, he opened his law office and married his Röschen. Julius quickly built up his career, as his niece recalls: *My father's youngest brother – Julius – was a very capable, well-known lawyer.* As we can determine from his gravestone, he managed to reach the rank of "Justizrat" (judicial counselor).

The two older brothers, on the other hand, did what their parents expected of them. It appears that Jakob enlisted a matchmaker to help him arrange his marriage. Adolph writes that his uncle personally traveled to Schlangenbad, incognito, to inspect his future wife Fanni, née Henlein (approx. 1815-1885). He must have found her satisfactory, because he married her. Together, they had three daughters and one son, who would go on to play a key role in the coin trade: Leo Hamburger, the younger partner of the coin dealership L. & L. Hamburger (1846-1929).

However, the identically named founder of this coin dealership, Leopold Hamburger (1836-1902), was one of the six children – four sons and two daughters – that came from the marriage between the oldest brother Joseph and Dorchén, née Cahn (approx. 1812-1874). In this marriage, too, love probably wasn't the main motivator. Even Adolph was surprised to find that his father's letters to his future wife did not reveal him as a *tender lover*, but rather as a *superior mentor*. And in fact, we have to assume that this clever woman, who knew several foreign

languages, was only Joseph's second choice, because Adolph writes: *As he [his father Joseph] often told me later, he would have preferred to settle in Frankfurt as a wholesaler. But at that time, this was simply impossible for any foreigners, let alone Jews, unless they had a great deal of money and married the daughter of a respectable Frankfurt family.*

But Dorchén's wealthy uncle, Frankfurt jeweler Markus Güldenstern, gave her a dowry befitting their social status. It may have been part of the deal that Joseph not only accepted Dorchén, but also her mother, into his household. And that's despite the fact that the rather liberal and pragmatic Joseph did not really get on with his mother-in-law throughout his life. Loeb Hamburger died on October 19, 1835. The brothers Joseph and Jakob used their inheritance to establish their own wholesale business. Jakob took over their father's large, but already somewhat derelict house, probably because he was a strictly Orthodox Jew and appreciated its proximity to the synagogue. His brother Joseph purchased a modern house for 4,500 gulden, which he affectionately referred to as his "*Schlösschen*" ("little castle"). The *masterpiece* by carpenter Conrad Deines was located at Langstraße 35 and therefore outside Judengasse. It became the center of the two Hamburger brothers' wholesale business.

It started out brilliantly: the enterprising, worldly Joseph regularly went to visit all the manufacturers between Hanau and Würzburg, whose factories he could travel to from the stations of the Main steamboat. He bought their goods and organized transportation to Hanau. Meanwhile, Jakob stayed at home as a constant point of contact for the retailers who procured their goods from the Hamburger brothers. For 15 years, the two brothers did a roaring trade at the Frankfurt trade fairs whenever they presented their goods there.



Halle/Saxony. Silver medal from 1846/47  
on the inflation and the hoped-for rich harvest by L. Haase and H. Lorenz.  
From Künker auction 92 (2004), Lot 2297.

But from the 1840s, at the latest, sales drastically declined. This was due to several factors. Firstly, the railway provided Hanau retailers with a relatively easy way to travel to Frankfurt, where they had a much larger range of goods to choose from. Secondly, more and more factories were building up their own network of agents. They were eliminating wholesaling by doing business directly with retailers via agents. And this meant that the two Hamburger brothers suddenly had to fight in order not to lose their social status.

### The Childhood and Youth of Leopold Hamburger the Elder

Just like his cousin of the same name, Leopold Hamburger the elder grew up in an upper-middle class household where funds were extremely scarce. His brother Adolph writes that, although there was enough to eat in the house, the family's capital melted away due to the high costs of raising the children. *We therefore had to avoid any excessive spending and frugality was regarded as one of the most important virtues.* One indicator of the family's economic situation is the fact that the mother ran the large household with just one servant.

Nevertheless, the sons received an outstanding education. After attending the cheder, they moved to the primary school and then to the secondary school, as Adolph describes: *They also sent us to the best educational institutions; the secondary school, and, when the Roedersche Privatinstitut began to outperform the latter, we also attended this much more expensive school, even though this was a great sacrifice at that time, in 1850, when conditions were so bleak. Of course, we four boys all had to study from one book, and the book was purchased second-hand. We had to make and line our own exercise books ourselves.*

As a child, Leopold was regarded as being hard-working, but far too serious: *From a young age, my eldest brother Leopold*

*was a serious, conscientious boy with a peaceable nature and was immensely likable. He was always the first one at school and he loved to learn. Our teacher Mr. Stern once said of him: "If I wanted to punish him, I'd make him play like the other children for once."*

Adolph also writes about the interaction with their Christian fellow students, which seems to have been remarkably casual. He was particularly impressed by the "Bescherung", their tradition of exchanging gifts at Christmas: *Especially for the annual "Bescherung", we all had to be present. I always thought this tradition was ... very nice, but I never felt any sense of envy or wished that it would be introduced for us. We often said that, as Jews, we had just as many holidays that the others had to miss out on. For all the liberalism and tolerance, it would not have occurred to anyone at the time that non-Christians could have celebrated the birth of the savior, in whom we did not believe.*

Adolph believed that it was only a matter of time before antisemitism ended for good: *Nor were we aware of any antisemitism at the time. There was certainly a lot of hatred and contempt for Jewish people; but this was a sad relic of the ghetto times. Both Christians and Jews had experienced the period of change at the beginning of the century. They saw the huge amount of progress that the Jewish community had made toward assimilating into society. It was generally believed that in two or three generations, people would no longer know the difference... There was a general culture of tolerance; no educated person would have argued against equal rights for Jewish people at that time. A very similar tolerance existed among the Jews themselves; some were strictly Orthodox, others were less so, and others still had given up observing the ceremonies altogether. Among the strict ones, the zealots were quite isolated. It was mostly the older people who (almost) all realized that, under the altered conditions, it was not possible to maintain the old customs and traditions among the younger generation.*

*Our family illustrated this situation: our grandmothers, who still lived entirely in accordance with the old customs; and our parents, who firmly believed in God as the controller of human destinies, and that He had inspired Moses and the lawmakers to write the religious laws of divine wisdom, but also that these laws could no longer apply to the current state of culture and were no longer binding.*

Here, Adolph Hamburger is dressing up reality rather drastically, since the economic problems had intensified the personal differences between the liberal Joseph and the strictly Orthodox Jakob. While Joseph argued that it was his primary duty to properly feed his family, Jakob vehemently insisted that none of the 613 commandments in the Talmud could be broken for economic reasons. The situation became even worse in 1847, when Joseph became so seriously ill that it was no longer possible for him to travel.



*Celebrating barricade fighters on March 18, 1848, on Breite Straße in Berlin. Hanau was spared fights like these, even though the town was a stronghold of the democratic movement. Two years later, following the intervention of foreign troops, the liberal constitution that had been fought for so courageously was repealed.*

And on top of that, in the summer of 1846, there was a failed harvest, which led to considerable inflation, as Adolph had to learn when he was still just a young child: *It made ... an ineradicable impression on me ... between 1846 and 1847, when I, not yet six years old, heard about the unaffordable inflation. When I asked whether we would now also sell everything in our store at higher prices, I was told that, on the contrary, we would sell less, because the customers would need everything they had for food. This also had a tangible impact on the children: When I, not much older, asked Mother for something that some of my other classmates were allowed, she referred me, in her gentle way, to my older siblings, who knew that my classmates' parents had more money and that our parents would still do everything they could for us. From early on, our father would make it clear to us, when we went on our walks, how essential it was that we got the most we could out of the school they were sending us to, because they would not be able to leave us anything else later. Indeed, I was not yet 12 years old, and I already shared his conviction and had a general understanding of the situation; nobody concealed from me the fact that we were eating away at our fortune with every passing year. My father said: "There won't be anything left by the time you're grown up, so then you'll just have to look after us."*

The Hamburgers weren't the only ones affected by the great inflation. In 1848, the economic hardship prompted people across Europe to take to the barricades. Hanau was one of the centers of the democratic movement. The March Revolution left a lasting impression on Adolph: *In the days leading up to March 7, there was already a lot of activity in the streets. In addition to the battalion of citizens, riflemen and hunters, which we particularly admired, a citizen's guard was formed. In the last few days, these were joined by scythesmen, mostly farmers, but also proletariats, who could not afford any other uniform and whose only weapons were their long scythes... For us children,*

*the constant activity, drumming, and music in the streets was very exciting... On Sunday morning, a messenger arrived, sent by our cousin Hess in Offenbach; through this messenger, Hess urged father, if he did not want to leave his home, to at least send the women and children to them in Offenbach. I see my father standing beside the men, telling us the message. Leopold, the oldest, immediately cried out: "I'm not leaving you; I need to see what happens next, too." And of course, we all agreed; the idea was rejected. My parents were not anxious at all; they were quite happy to let Julius and me roam around the bustling alleys and experience what was going on.*

All of Joseph Hamburger's sons probably went to marvel at the citizen's battalion that forced Prince-electoral Frederick William to accept the people's demands. At that time, our chronicler Adolph was just six years old: *The shooting, which kept going on endlessly, was terrifying for me. And I saw the same spectacle in the neighboring streets, too. Fearing for my life, I pulled Julius into a nearby corridor that was full of people. I do not know who told Father, but after an hour, he came to find us and pulled us home through streets still ringing with shots, while I covered my ears with my hands.*

Their father Joseph Hamburger was also involved in the actions of the liberal middle classes: *It was also new for me to see Father, whom I had rarely seen in uniform before, now having to be on guard duty once or twice every week for 24 hours at a time... Father joined the newly formed citizen's association and would return late in the evenings, bringing the latest news and telling us about the speeches that had been made.*

In 1850, the Hamburger brothers had to make a difficult decision. They decided to start running a retail business in addition to their wholesale business. This aggravated their religious disputes, because now their opening hours became a point of contention. Jakob insisted on keeping the business closed on the Sabbath. Joseph argued that the farmer's market on Saturdays would draw the most people to the town, and therefore to their business.

In the same year, Leo Hamburger the elder celebrated his 14th birthday, and was therefore old enough to start learning a trade. The dire state of the Hamburgers' finances at this time is illustrated by the fact that Leo completed his apprenticeship in his father's store and not, as was customary at the time, in a renowned business. The family could not afford to pay the apprenticeship premium! It was therefore pure luck that one of Joseph Hamburger's former Munich colleagues paid the family a visit, as Adolph reports: *In 1851 ... Feist Schwab visited us from Munich and arranged for Leopold to be taken on as an apprentice for four years at the bank I. M. Oberndörffer, with free board and lodging and without any payment on either side. He then took Leopold back to Munich with him when he left. Of course, it was a major event for the eldest of us to leave his father's home and his hometown, especially as Munich was very far away by the standards of the time. The railway was not completed until three years later.*

This stroke of fortune set the course for the history of the German coin trade, because, in addition to the usual banking business, the bank of the brothers Samson (1791-1866) and Joseph Nathan (1793-1866) Oberndörffer also operated an international coin dealership, with branches in Ansbach, Munich, Paris, and Vienna.

Did Leopold Hamburger already have some basic understanding of numismatics at that time? We don't know. Adolph doesn't mention anything about it in his writings. In fact, it is only thanks to his description of a childish escapade involving his older brother Mathias (\*1837, date of death unknown) that we learn that the Hamburger boys apparently owned small coin collections: *When he [Mathias] turned 15 years old, Father instructed him to lay tefillin for a year – not for religious reasons, but rather because he thought it necessary to ensure that we boys did not cause any offense in Jewish circles. This became an ongoing struggle with Mathias. One morning in May, he said to father: "I won't wear that saddle anymore" and ran off to school. Father marched up to the school, intending to call Mathias to the principal's office. Mathias, whose classroom was on the ground floor, saw Father arrive, excused himself from the class, sprinted home, threw together what he considered his most valuable possessions (his watch, his money box, some commemorative coins), stuffed his pockets with some Easter bread, and called to his mother in the living room: "Adieu, you will not be seeing me again", and off he went. Incidentally, he came back the same evening after he'd eaten the Easter bread and started getting hungry.*

In any case, Munich had everything Leopold Hamburger would have needed to learn about numismatics from scratch. He made the most of it. We can see how eager he was to meet all his mentors' requirements from the fact that he, a boy no older than 15, invested the little pocket money he received in private writing lessons. And the Oberndörffer brothers must have been very satisfied with Leo Hamburger's work, because they went on to offer his brother Mathias an apprenticeship at the bank, too.

His direct superior and mentor was Abraham Merzbacher (1812-1885), father of the much better-known coin dealer Dr. Eugen Merzbacher (1845-1903). At that time, he was running the Oberndörffer family's Munich-based coin dealership on their behalf. Abraham Merzbacher had actually trained as a rabbi. He completed his studies in philosophy with the state examination for rabbinic candidates in Bavaria, but instead of assuming a rabbinate, he went to Paris, where he trained for several years at the leading Parisian coin dealership at the time, Rollin & Feuardent. In 1843, following his return, Abraham Merzbacher opened his own coin dealership in the Franconian town of Baiersdorf. We don't know whether the business was as profitable as the young entrepreneur had imagined, or whether there were other factors that prompted the promising coin dealer to accept a position as the tutor of Adolph Oberndörffer (1823-1894), son of Joseph Nathan Oberndörffer. Employer and tutor probably knew each other already, since

the Oberndörffer family also came from Franconia, namely from Ansbach, located around 60 kilometers away as the crow flies, where they still had their own coin dealership. In any case, Joseph Nathan Oberndörffer secured the young tutor's numismatic potential only a few months after he took up his teaching duties by offering him the hand of his eldest daughter Nanette "Nanny" (1818-1896). Family and personal connections may have played much more of a central role in the early stage of the coin trade than we could imagine today. For example, Lippmann Baer Feistmann, the Munich colleague of Joseph Hamburger who had arranged the apprenticeship for Leopold Hamburger the elder at the Oberndörffer bank, was also related to Abraham Merzbacher: he had married his half-sister.

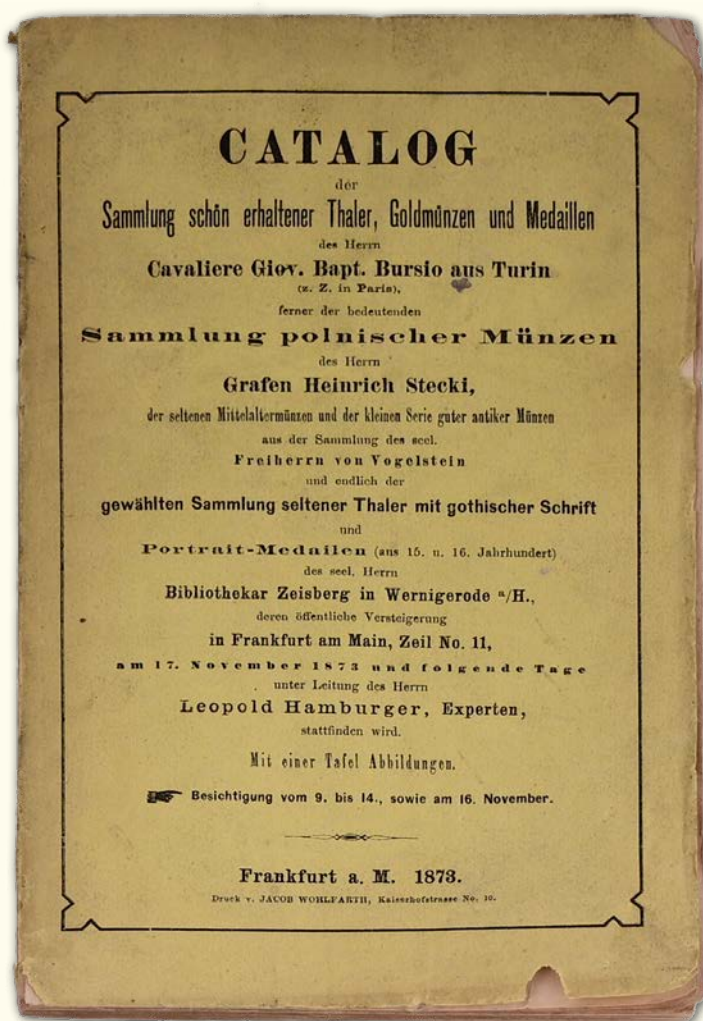
On the 50th anniversary of Abraham Merzbacher's death, Lion Feuchtwanger described the great numismatist as a *skillful, experienced man of business and of the world, full of charm, who had understood how to combine a strict observance of the old Jewish faith and lifestyle with a liberal-minded openness toward business and life.*

This attitude must have impressed Leo Hamburger, since he too struggled to reconcile the demands of the working world with his strong faith. Adolph describes this deep religiosity as follows: *Perhaps because of his natural disposition...he [Leopold], even as a boy, showed a preference for the old customs, observed fasts, and abstained from forbidden foods with our grandmother and Uncle Jakob.*

So, it must have hit him all the harder when the religious differences between his father Joseph and his uncle Jakob ultimately led to the dissolution of their shared business: *This rift was caused by the dismissal of a shochet, an old man in his seventies, which was demanded by our uncle and the Orthodox businessmen because of an oversight on his part. Father stood up for the old man on humanitarian grounds and accused Uncle of damaging the business by positioning himself at the head of the Orthodox community. And so, all of a sudden, the intimate relationship between the two families was disrupted. We only saw one another at our grandmother's or at the store...*



Medal commemorating the 70th birthday of Samson Oberndörffer (1791-1866). From Künker auction 267 (2015), Lot 5022.



Front cover of the catalog for Auction 3 of the Leopold Hamburger coin dealership; it includes, among others, the collections of Cavaliere Giovanni Battista Bursio, Count Heinrich von Stecki, and Carl Wilhelm Zeisberg. The auction was held from November 17, 1873, and included 4,573 lots. From *Künker auction 357* (December 7-9, 2021), Lot 3577.

Although Julius Hamburger, the lawyer, tried everything to reach a peaceful settlement between the other two brothers, no solution could be found that both brothers considered acceptable. It was only thanks to an unexpected death in 1854 that Joseph had sufficient means to pay off his brother: the childless jeweler Markus Güldenstein had left 10,000 gulden to his only niece, Joseph's wife Dorchon, though the money would not find its way to her until after the death of his widow, who was known for being extremely stingy. Adolph describes her as follows: *This woman was one of a kind. Whenever we came*

*to Frankfurt, we had to dutifully visit her. She would smother you with kindness; you were the apple of her eye, but nobody could boast of having ever eaten a piece of buttered bread at her home. It was she who lay dying in 1854. When he heard this news, Joseph hurried straight to Frankfurt, not only to watch over her deathbed, but also to keep an eye on the vast inheritance. But when the widow passed away, the heirs experienced a great fright. Under her bed stood a great iron chest; they assumed that it contained the valuables and opened it; it contained porcelain; they naturally thought that, despite their vigilance, everything had been stolen; eventually, they found a tiny little box, right at the back against the wall, with the securities inside.*

Three quarters of Uncle Güldenstein's great fortune went to Dorchon, while one quarter went to her mother, who – despite the personal dislike and religious differences between them – decided to take the advice of a relative and invest her capital in her son-in-law's business as well. This meant that Joseph Hamburger finally had enough money to pay off Jakob. He also had enough to rent and stock a business premises in the town center. He decided – much to the annoyance of his mother-in-law – to open on Saturdays, as Röschen Schlessinger, née Hamburger, reports: *There was a big market on Saturdays, which brought with it most of the business for the manufactured goods industry. My uncle [Joseph] would open his store, located on Hauptstraße in Hanau, after the market on the Sabbath, which meant that he attracted a lot of customers among the farmers. My father [Jakob] shifted the focus of his business more toward cloth and linen, and was able to make a decent living.*

Adolph explains that the decision to open the shop on the Sabbath remained a point of contention in the Hamburgers' family life: *It was funny when Father would count up his daily takings, which he always did at home after dinner in the evenings, on Saturdays too, perhaps a little ostentatiously; the old woman, though she did not say anything, would always look at the pile of silver, because Saturday was by far the best business day.*

### Leo Hamburger Finds His Own Coin Dealership

This stroke of luck changed many things for Leopold Hamburger. He now had legitimate reason to hope that, with the support of his father and the substantial dowry of his future wife, he might someday open a financially stable coin dealership of his own. In 1861, his hopes came true. Leopold Hamburger, who had now taken over management of the Oberndörffers' coin dealership in Vienna, founded his own company, which, in its early stages, sold minerals as well as coins.

Just two years later, we find him in Frankfurt. Here, he founded the coin dealership Leopold Hamburger & Baer in 1863, together with Leopold Joseph Baer (1799-1864). His partner was the son of Joseph Baer (1787-1851) and ran an internationally known antiquarian bookstore and auction house in Frankfurt, a business he had inherited from his father. Perhaps the families already knew each other from Hanau, because the company's founder also hailed from the town's

Judengasse. Leopold Joseph Baer died in 1864, so that by 1865 at the latest, Leopold Hamburger was running the business under his own name. He continued to maintain good relations with the descendants of his business partner, illustrated by the fact that they worked with Leopold Hamburger when he held his first four auctions between 1871 and 1875. Perhaps it was during these years that Adolph E. Cahn, who would go on to establish a dynasty of coin and antique dealers that is still around to this day, learned the numismatic trade from Leopold Hamburger. After all, he had married a daughter of the Baer family.

In any case, by the mid-1870s, Leopold Hamburger probably already had some significant business capital at his disposal. His father Joseph died on May 18, 1866, making Leopold his heir. In addition, his marriage to Caroline Gütel (1849-1925), daughter of David Aron Rothschild (1805-1873) and his wife Caroline Rothschild (ca. 1775-1833), certainly brought him a substantial dowry, even though Caroline did not come from the well-known banking family descended from Meyer Amschel Rothschild. We don't know when the two of them married; it couldn't have been any later than February 1871, because in November, the couple's oldest daughter Cäcilie Cilly, married Goldschmidt (1871-1943), was born. Five other children would follow: Dora Tirza, married Rosenbaum (1876-1939); Tila, married Libya (\*1878); Selma, married Mansbach (\*1880); David (\*1881), and Joseph (1874-1929), who we'll hear a bit more about later on.

## L. & L. Hamburger

Leo Hamburger's coin dealership made fantastic progress. In the expansion stage between 1863 and 1866, Leopold's brother Adolph, whose life story provided most of the quotes we've used for the Hamburger family, worked closely with him, unfortunately without writing anything about his activities. In 1868, after Adolph left, Leopold Hamburger's cousin, who was also called Leopold (1846-1929), took over this work. He was the only son of Jakob Hamburger, whose cloth business apparently did not yield enough profit to adequately support an additional family.

We don't know what kind of training the younger Leopold Hamburger had. In any case, he must have been more than capable, because in 1875, Leopold the elder made him his partner. Once again, marriage and dowry probably have played a decisive role in this step, because just a few months later, on April 25, 1876, Leo Hamburger the younger married Meta Feuchtwanger. We can therefore assume that his cousin had been involved in some way: after all, the Feuchtwanger family were intimate acquaintances of the Oberndörffers, which meant that Leopold Hamburger the elder probably connected his cousin and Meta with each other.

From 1889, the coin dealership L. & L. Hamburger held auctions on a regular basis. Some of the collections entrusted to them for auction are almost legendary. The first truly significant item was the extensive collection owned by Prince Alexander of Hesse and by Rhine (1823-1888), whose publications made

him famous throughout Germany as a notable numismatist. The *Biographische Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich* (English: "Biographical Encyclopedia of the Austrian Empire"), which was published during the prince's lifetime, dedicates an entire section to his collection: *As a particular enthusiast of history and regional geography, the prince had laid the foundations for a general coin collection from an early stage, namely on his travels, with great knowledge and care. Later, in order to achieve something complete in one direction, he limited this collection to just the Hessian coins, but focused on the latter to the fullest possible extent. This valuable collection is probably the most complete of any German state, displayed behind great glass frames of unpolished walnut at the Heiligenberg estate. What gives it its particular value is the fact that it was scientifically arranged and described by the prince himself in three volumes as the "Heiligenberg coin cabinet".*

When you look at the front cover of this auction catalog, you'll notice that this collection was auctioned "vom 21.10.1889 u.f.T.". The meaning of this abbreviation, unfamiliar to us, was explained by Erich Cahn (1913-1993) in his article on the Frankfurt coin trade: *There was no "auction timetable": usually, catalogs would simply provide the first day of the auction (without any indication of a particular time), followed by "und folgende Tage" ("and the following days").* He also tells us how we might imagine the process of these auctions: *The auctions themselves were held exclusively in the small business premises of the companies, a very small scale by today's standards. It was not uncommon for just four or five bidders to be present: more than ten was considered a high turnout. Selling 40-50% of the goods up for auction was considered normal – selling 60% (which was the maximum) was considered an outstanding result, and none of the famous collections mentioned later achieved more than that.*

Mark Salton confirms this: *It was not the general habit in those days for out-of-town collectors to attend auction sales in person, participation was mostly by mail bid or by dealer representation; consequently the number of people present rarely exceeded a dozen, sometimes it was as low as 4 or 5. Unlike today, auction sales were not held in hotel facilities, but on the premises of the auctioneer. As each coin came up for bidding, it would be shown by an attendant to anyone wishing to examine it. Occasionally a bidder might look longer than the patience of the other tolerated, yet the atmosphere always remained pleasant and amicable.*

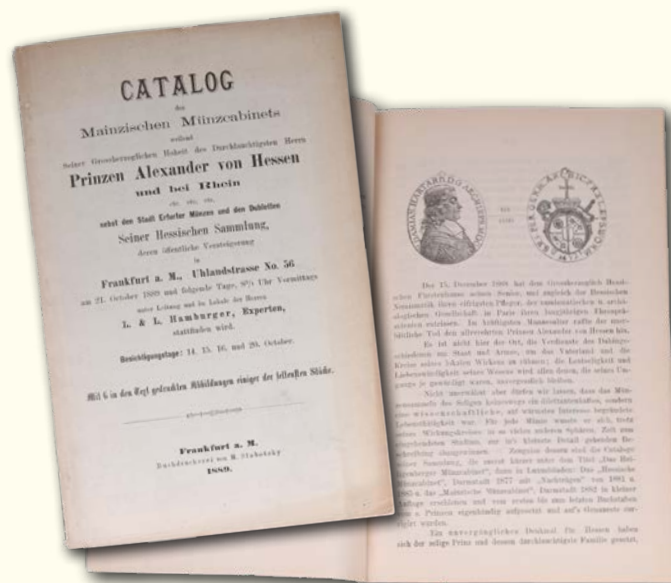
The coin dealership L. & L. Hamburger achieved international renown when it auctioned the coin collection of Milan-born silk manufacturer Ercole Gnechi (1850-1932), which was sold in several catalogs in 1902 and 1903.

The dealership also had a particularly good reputation in Switzerland. L. & L. Hamburger was known as "the" specialist for Swiss coins ever since the auction house had very successfully brought to market the "Raritäten-Cabinet" ("rarity cabinet") belonging to silk manufacturer and politician Hans Wunderly von Muralt (1842-1921) in a total of seven parts.

## Famous catalogs of the coin dealership L. & L. Hamburger.



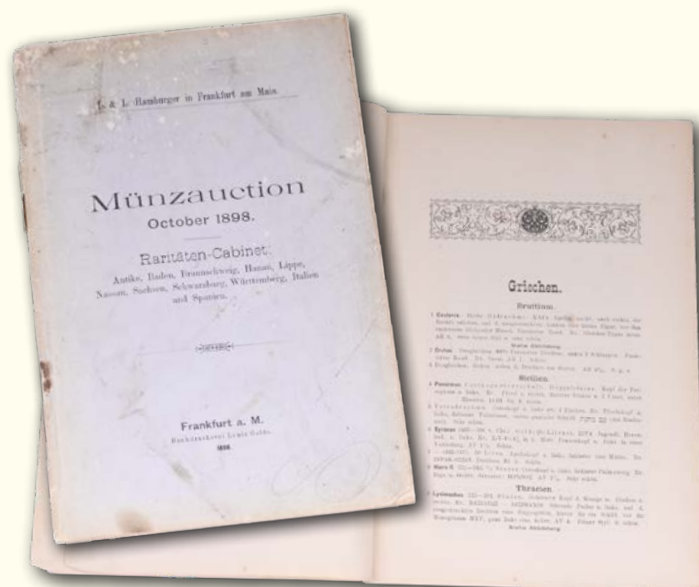
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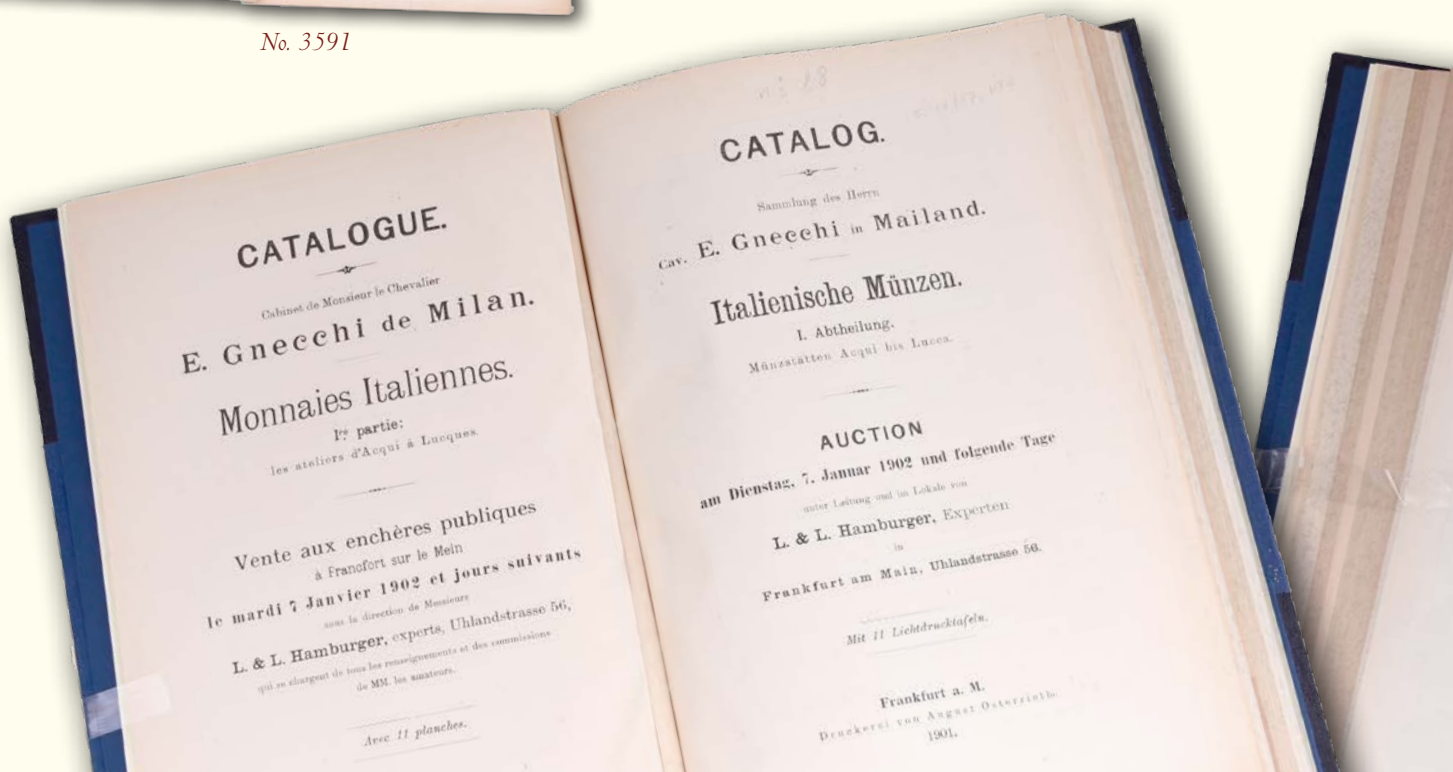
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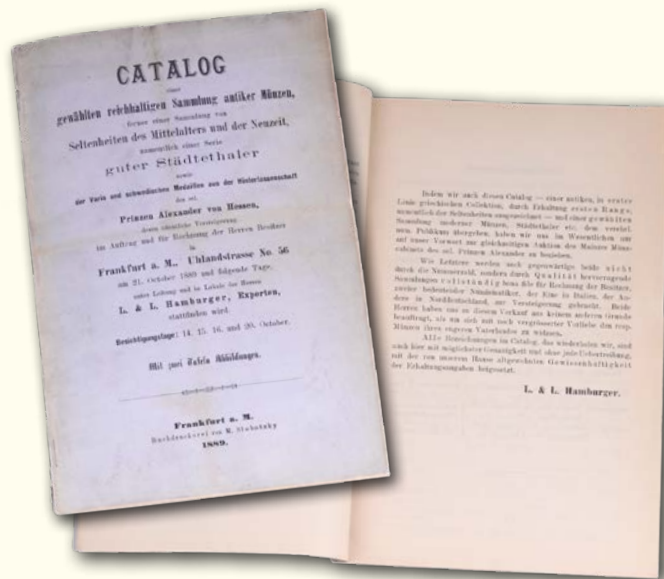


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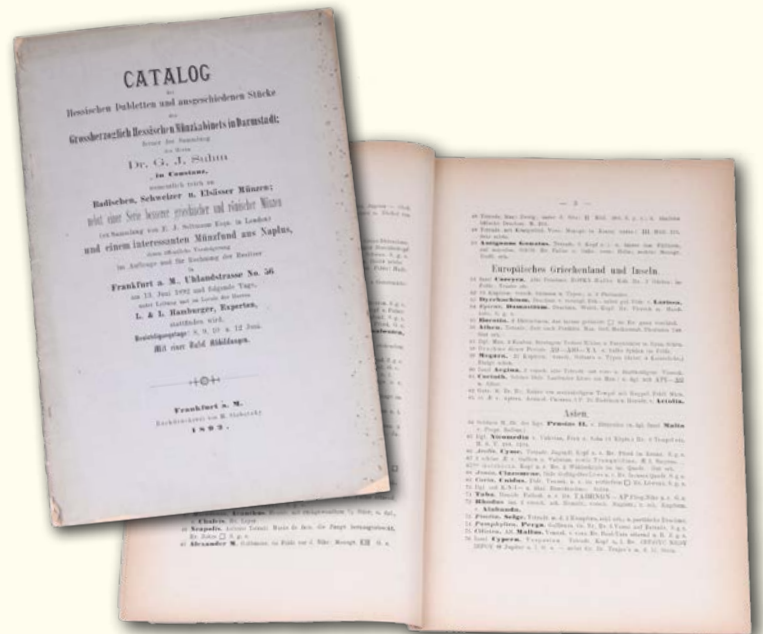


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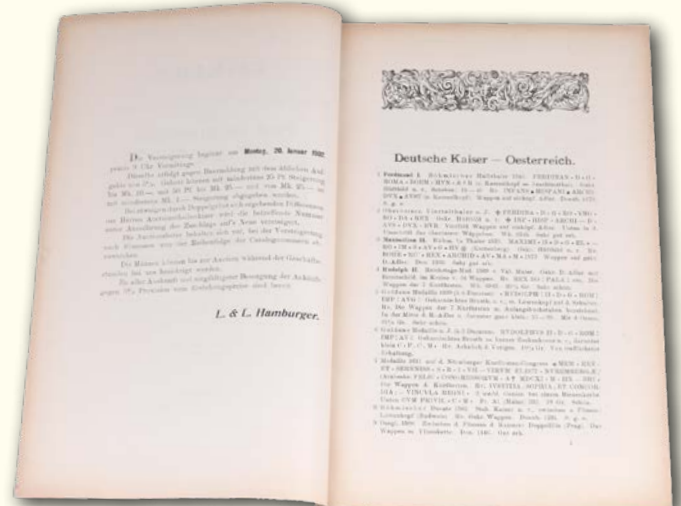
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No. 3596



No. 3606



The catalog for the coin collection of silk manufacturer Ercole Gnechi (1850-1932), which was sold over the course of several auctions by the coin dealership L. & L. Hamburger in 1902 and 1903. From Künker auction 357 (December 7-9, 2021), Lot 3605.

**Anzeigen.**

Nach Auflösung der Firma  
**L. & L. Hamburger**  
 betreibt der Unterzeichnete, Sohn des verstorbenen Gründers und Seniorchefs, Herrn  
**Leopold Hamburger**, das numismatische Geschäft unter der Firma  
**Joseph Hamburger**  
 in dem bisherigen Lokale  
**Uhlandstraße 56.**  
 Frankfurt a. Main. **Joseph Hamburger.**

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Nachdem ich die früher mit meinem verstorbenen Associé **Leopold Hamburger**  
 unter der Firma  
**L. & L. Hamburger**  
 betriebene Münzenhandlung vom **1. Januar 1904** ab mit allen Aktiven und Passiven auf  
 meine alleinige Rechnung übernommen habe, führe ich dieselbe nunmehr unter meiner  
 neuen Firma  
**Leo Hamburger**  
 in sonst ganz unveränderter Weise fort.  
 Frankfurt a. Main. **Leo Hamburger,**  
 Scheffelstraße 24.



*The two advertisements that the competing coin dealerships used to promote their companies in the 1905 issue of the Frankfurter Münzzeitung.*

*Joseph Hamburger (1874-1929).*

### The Struggle for the Inheritance: Two Coin Dealerships Called Hamburger

On February 12, 1902, Leo Hamburger the elder died. His partner may well have felt that he was the natural heir to the coin dealership. A few months after Leo Hamburger's death, however, his only son still alive at the time, Joseph (1874-1929), showed up to lay claim to his father's inheritance. Röschen Schlessinger tells us how he had learned the trade in the dealership when he was a young man, just like all his relatives. After that he had longed to go abroad, first to Berlin, then to Great Britain, and finally to Australia, where – as Röschen Schlessinger also tells us – his uncle Mathias traded in colonial goods. Perhaps Mathias helped his nephew to get himself established. But he probably didn't find any lasting success, as Joseph returned to Frankfurt as soon as he heard about his father's death.

His claims to his inheritance led to a vehement dispute with his uncle Leo Hamburger the younger, which was not settled until 1905. Joseph Hamburger took over his father's house at Uhlandstraße 56, where the coin dealership L. & L. Hamburger had been based. Leo Hamburger, the Younger, took over the company with its library and stock, but he had to move to a new address. In the long run, it seems to be Leo Hamburger who won the struggle. Joseph Hamburger only managed to land one single numismatic coup, when he was consigned the collection of the knight Max von Wilmersdörffer (1824-1903), an old friend of his father's from the latter's apprenticeship in Munich.

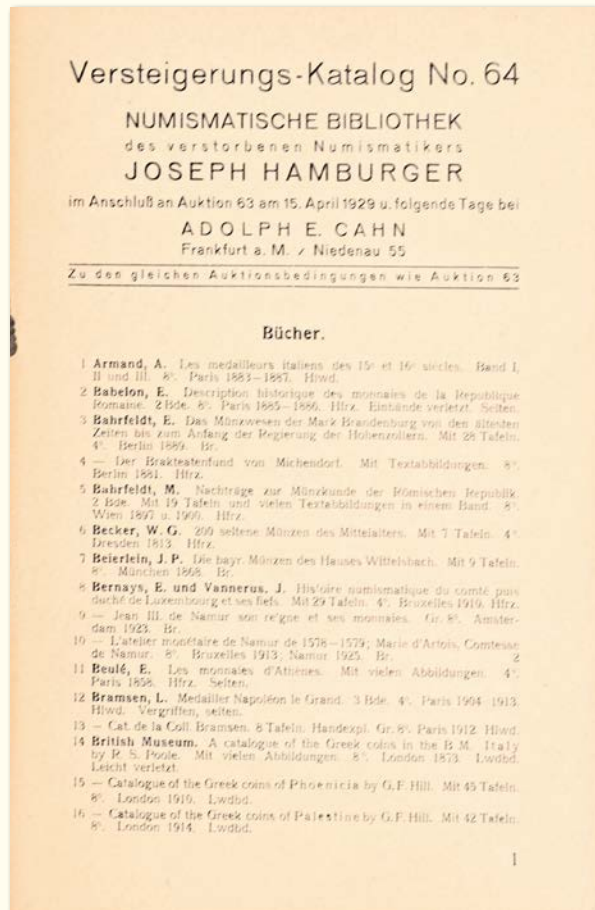
Wilmersdörffer had inherited his father-in-law Joseph Nathan Oberndörffer's banking business after his death. Now, Joseph was selling his collection for his heirs. By 1909, he was already holding his last auction; after that, he "only" published fixed price lists and dealt increasingly in small objects of ancient art. The fact that it wasn't Leo Hamburger's heirs who auctioned his library, but rather the coin dealership Adolph E. Cahn, illustrates just how deep the rift between Joseph and Leo Hamburger was.

### The Person Leo Hamburger

We have several personal memories about Leo Hamburger. The first word has his grandnephew, Mark Salton, who remembers his granduncle in his memoirs: *My own memories of Uncle Leo and his wife Aunt Meta are still very vivid. They occupied an apartment one floor above the office, to which it was connected by a circular flight of stairs, in a building owned by the firm. The two upper floors were rented to tenants. For my younger brother Paul and me it was an established habit, albeit not always a voluntary one, to pay them a visit on Saturday afternoons. Dutifully we would stay for a while, but were allowed to browse through a pile of coffee table volumes of which the most sought-after was invariably a colorful world atlas that had seen better days. Uncle Leo impressed little chaps like us as a respect-inspiring person, very lank and tall, always wearing a dark suit and gold-rimmed spectacles. He would routinely question us what we had learned in school the previous week and, where our answers fell short,*



The first catalog for the “new” coin dealership of Joseph Hamburger included the first part of the Max Ritter von Wilmersdörffer collection. The auction began on October 16, 1905. From *Künker auction 357* (December 7-9, 2021), Lot 3566.



In April 1929, the Frankfurt auction house Adolph E. Cahn auctioned Joseph Hamburger's library.



The 1920s were the heyday of the Frankfurt coin trade. Here are a few catalogs for some notable auctions published by Leo Hamburger during this decade. From *Künker auction 357* (December 7-9, 2021), Lots 3642, 3654, 3648, 3657, 3658.

supplement the missing links, followed by his usual admonition “remember what I told you”. Once in a while our reward was a handful of poorly preserved Roman coins, too worn to be sold to customers, except to the warden of the Saalburg. The latter regularly made the rounds with all Frankfurt coin dealers to purchase their badly worn, often totally corroded Romans, which he then sold to the tourists as “unearthed on the grounds of the castle.”

In his article on the Frankfurt coin trade, Erich Cahn, too, contributed a personal account on the occasion of the auction featuring the collection of Genevan private banker Henry Fatio, which he claims to have attended at the age of 18. This anecdote demonstrates just how carefully such accounts need to be fact-checked, as Erich Cahn is actually

mistaken here. Leo Hamburger had already died on February 16, 1929; the Fatio collection was not auctioned until October 19, 1931. We may therefore assume that Erich Cahn is getting two memories mixed up: At the age of 18, I was given the opportunity to represent my father's company for a short time at the auction. It was run by Leo Hamburger, assisted by the young Dr. Hans Nussbaum. Mr. Hamburger was already rather old and he was regarded, especially by younger people, as an unapproachable man deserving of respect; his Jewish piety, incidentally, also earned him a certain level of renown. In the auction room – “hall” would be an exaggeration – there were seven or eight bidders present. I suppose I had some minor task to do; in any case I remember that almost all of the 23 magnificent testones and half-testones of Fribourg from the Renaissance period were returned unsold.



*Cityscape of Mainz, where Felix Schlessinger grew up, around 1890.*

Let us close with the obituary by Fritz Blatter, the Vice President of the Swiss Numismatic Society in his later years. In his obituary, he praised Leo Hamburger's integrity: *The way he kept it [the Hamburger coin dealership] going was praised by all who came into close contact with him. He was not really a dealer to his customers in the usual sense; he was a supporter, an advisor, and a friend at the same time. How inspiring were his great auctions, which were held as though within a family, framed by traditional Frankfurt friendliness and cordiality. Leo Hamburger had an astounding level of knowledge and a superb memory, and he was well-known for his integrity. It is no wonder that his auctions always became memorable events for everyone involved, or that all the great Swiss collectors of the last fifty years remained loyal to him throughout his life. ...*

*Even at the Th. Grossman auction of 1926, he conducted the event alone and did not let his 80 years show. Last autumn, he placed the auction of the Iklé collection in younger hands and it was easy to see how much pleasure he took in watching his son-in-law, Mr. D. Nussbaum, and his grandson, Dr. Hans Nussbaum, run the auction so completely in line with his own style.*

*On October 18, 1928, having grown visibly tired, he bid me a fond farewell, leaving me with the strong sense that we would not see each other again. Two months later, he lost his much-loved wife, who had been suffering for many years, and on February 16, 1929, he followed her in death.*

*In him, we have lost a gracious man of outstanding character, a man who had no enemies.*

### **The Schlessinger Family**

Leo Hamburger left behind several successors who continued his coin dealership in line with his ideas and principles. One of them was Joel Felix Schlessinger (1879-1944), the father of Max Schlessinger / Mark Salton. In this chapter, we'll find out how and why the Hamburger and Schlessinger families' stories were intertwined, and why Felix did not stay in Frankfurt, but rather moved his coin dealership to Berlin. Thanks to the memoirs of his sister Sophie, married Diamant (1880-1972), we now know a great deal about the life of this likable, courageous, and resourceful man, whose childhood escapades are almost reminiscent of Ludwig Thoma's playful "Lausbubengeschichten" ("Little Scoundrel Stories").

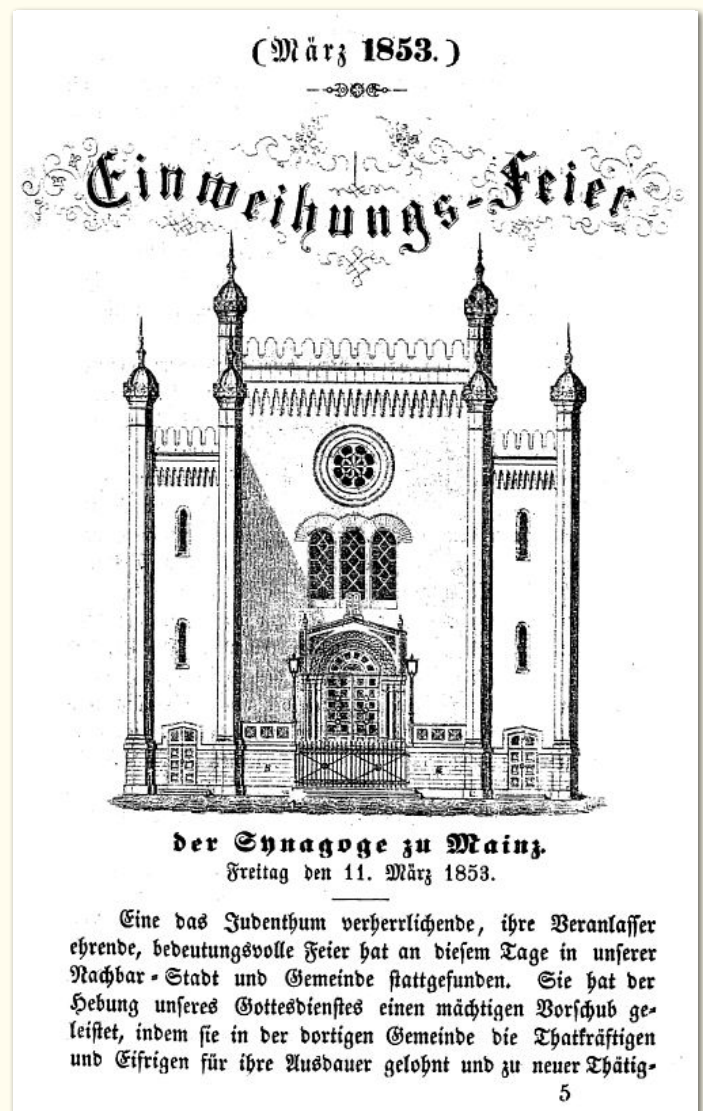
## An Idyllic Childhood

Felix Schlessinger was born into a large, traditional family. His father, the Mainz-born banker Maximilian Mordechai Schlessinger (1835-1896), was one of the twelve children of Talmud scholar Isidor Schlessinger (1788-1865) and his wife Rosalie, née Hirsch (1775-1839). The latter was proud to be descended from the Bad Mergentheim court factor Lazarus Hirsch (+1817), who himself only had two children. It is therefore safe to assume that Rosalie brought a good dowry to her husband when they married, which was enough to finance not only a proper banking business, but also an excellent education for all their children. Not all of Isidor and Rosalie Schlessinger's children made good use of this education. The successful banker Max – the eldest surviving son, two others had died in infancy – was repeatedly forced to help out poor relatives who asked him for support.

It was not until long after his father's death that Max Schlessinger decided to marry, at the age of 38. This was relatively late. His chosen bride Röschen Hamburger, at 28 years old, was also not young by the standards of the time. Perhaps that's why their marriage was so harmonious. Röschen writes the following about her husband: *My own marriage took me to Mainz. My husband Max Schlessinger had a small banking business, as well as life insurance and the lottery. He was very hard-working and he supported his family (six children; four girls and two boys) very well.*

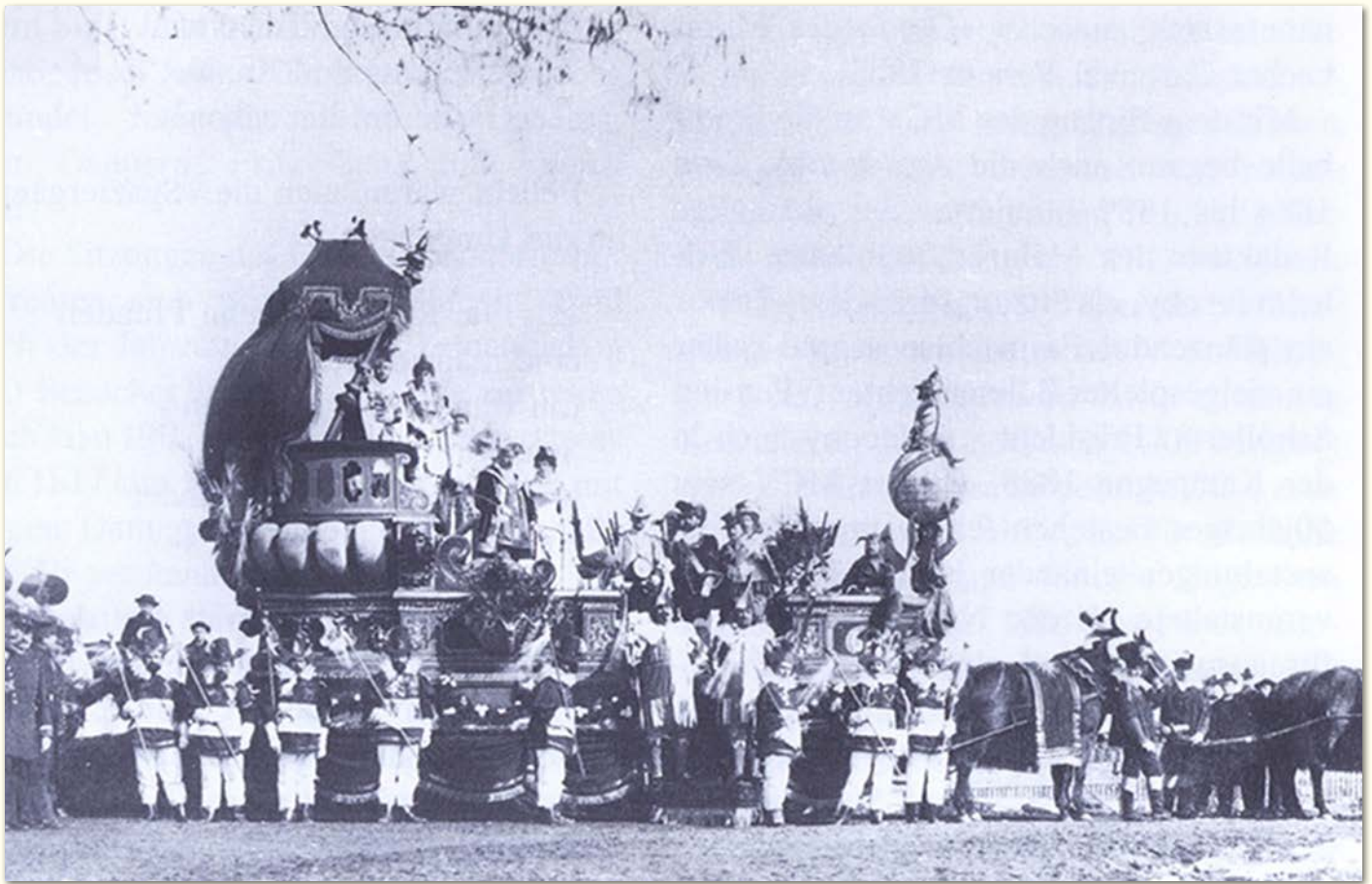
The early years of their marriage must have been very happy. Max and Röschen Schlessinger lived just as wealthy middle-class families were wont to live at that time. Their daughter Sophie recalls their large, eight-room residence at Große Bleiche 36 – right in the center of Mainz – with five additional attic rooms; though the infrastructure of the time isn't exactly what we'd describe as luxurious: *We had three living rooms with beautiful, well-maintained parquet floors and five bedrooms. There was no plumbing yet and I still clearly remember when the water had to be pumped to the reservoir in the kitchen using a big pump in the courtyard. Nor were there any sewer systems at that time. We children found it fascinating when the toilets had to be pumped out through hoses every few months with a special machine. Once a week, a truck came with a bathtub and barrels of hot water, and the whole family would take a bath one after the other. But soon, a water pipeline was laid and my father set up a bathroom right away... My father was always one of the first to start using the latest feats of modern technology; he also had one of the first telephone lines, proved by the fact that our number was 160... We always kept two maids in the house, all of whom worked for us for years.*

Max Schlessinger was strictly Orthodox. This may well have played a role in his decision to marry Röschen, who had also been raised in a strictly Orthodox household. This way, he was able to ensure that his children were educated as he saw fit, in accordance with stringent religious standards.



*In 1853 the central synagogue of Mainz was inaugurated. In the same year, the qabal afforded one the first synagogue organs in Germany. This was one of the reasons why the Orthodox members decided to establish their own synagogue.*

Max Schlessinger was one of the most important supporters of the Mainz secession community, a very modern denomination of Judaism at the time, which had been established at the suggestion of the widely known Mainz rabbi Markus Meyer Lehmann (1831-1890). He took advantage of an option that had been legally possible since July 28, 1876, which enabled Jews who did not wish to accept the new, liberal ideas of their congregation to establish their own community, where services were held without any organ music and using the old prayer books. Since their synagogue was damaged in the explosion of



*The Prince's float in the Shrove Monday procession of 1886, designed by the sculptor Anton Scholl.*

the powder tower in 1857, he raised enough money to fund the construction of a large, impressive synagogue. Max Schlessinger probably bore a substantial share of the costs, because his second eldest daughter Karoline (1876-1911), as Sophie recalls, was given a crucial role at the inauguration of the new building. She carried the key on a red cushion. The important role played by this key in the ceremony is described by Rabbi Markus Meyer Lehmann himself in an issue of the "Der Israelit" newspaper from June 4, 1879: *While singing the 122nd Psalm ... the procession made its way into the festively decorated synagogue courtyard, where seven young girls marked the moment of consecration by reciting a poem – one of the girls, Miss Bertha Bondi, recited the poem itself, while the others repeated the refrain. The key was handed over to the architect of the building, who then presented it to the mayor of the city of Mainz, Dr. Dumont, after explaining that this ceremonial handover of the key to the city's highest authority symbolized the fact that this building was a public one, which, like other public buildings, enjoyed the special protection of the laws. The mayor, visibly moved, then spoke some uplifting words, emphasizing the great significance and sacred purpose of this place of worship.* In the presence of the entire military and civilian administration, not forgetting all the pastors and priests – there were a total of 1,200 guests at the inauguration – the

synagogue was opened with a solemn service, which would certainly have been attended by the entire Schlessinger family. In general, it seems that Max Schlessinger took the duties of an Orthodox Jew very seriously. For example, he sent his children to visit the city's poor with "schlachmones", edible gifts that are still distributed today on the Jewish holiday of Purim. Sophie recalls this practice: *Sending and receiving the schlachmones was exciting, too. We children were sent to visit people in need with parcels and baskets. Father would always hide some money in them too, but we did not know that.* Max Schlessinger would also often invite a guest, someone in need, into the family home on the Sabbath to share their evening meal: *My father always brought a poor man from the synagogue home for dinner, whom he would always draw into the conversation at the table. Most of these men came from Poland, got a ticket from one Jewish community to another, and then eventually ended up in America. Sometimes, non-Jewish people sneaked in too, to get themselves a good supper.*

Notice how casually Sophie recounts this detail: interaction with non-Jewish people was very relaxed in those decades leading up to the turn of the century. Sophie tells us: *We had Christian friends from our school days onward, nor was there any discrimination in our business dealings. Of course, we Orthodox*

*Jews were limited in our interaction with people of other faiths, since we could not eat anything in their homes.*

But we shouldn't imagine that the Schlessinger's strict faith stopped them from being happy. On the contrary. Felix grew up in a turbulent household, with many more children than adults. In addition to his own six children, Max also took in his nephew Arnold Louis Napoleon Cahn following the death of his brother-in-law Jacob Wolf Cahn. He was also regularly visited by the six children of his youngest brother Leo Schlessinger (1835-1901) and the five children of his sister-in-law Jeannette Simon, née Hamburger (1840-1919). So, it must have been pretty busy at the Schlessinger household, with their father Max right in the middle of it all. Sophie describes her father as an incredibly kind person, who loved children. He amazed the youngsters with little magic tricks and took the whole horde out for walks. On these walks, he would "accidentally" drop coins, and those who found them were allowed to pick up them and keep them. Sophie tells us that Max would keep losing coins until every child had found something. She also mentions that the successful banker was able to have a good laugh at his own expense.

Music played a key role in Felix Schlessinger's idyllic and carefree childhood. The family loved to harmonize in the choir – after all, as we know from an issue of "Der Israelit" from October 30, 1884 – the synagogue choir of the Mainz congregation was conducted by Maximilian's youngest brother. Max's second eldest daughter Karoline was a talented pianist, and Felix was supposed to be learning the violin, but ... *My brother Felix ... did not...love practicing, and once, when he saw his teacher coming up the front steps, he slipped away down the back stairs. That put an end to his music career.* This end turned out to be only temporary; as Mark Salton tells us in his memoirs, his father was a gifted violinist, who loved playing music together with others. In general, little Felix was always making his family laugh. Like many young boys, he was a late riser who thought that baths were a waste of time: *We siblings would also exchange small gifts [on Rosh Hashanah]. Once, Lina gave Felix a "Waschlappen" (a washcloth). But she had not quite mastered spelling yet. She wrote that she was giving him a "Wachlappen" (literally translating as "waking rag"), which was just as appropriate in this case, since Felix did not enjoy crawling out of bed in the morning. This was understandable in winter; despite our large home, the brothers slept in a very cold attic room and, in the mornings, the water in the washbowl was usually frozen over. The boys were hardly inclined to go to the trouble of thawing it. I also think that winter used to be much colder in the past. Once, Felix got frostbite on his ear, which grew very big and fat. And to add insult to injury, we also mocked him for it: we started calling him "the donkey".* Sophie also recalls Felix Schlessinger's "imprisonment" in the storehouse, where apples and pears were stored for the winter: *Once, Felix was locked in the storehouse as punishment for some murderous deed. After some time, we started wondering why it was so silent in the room, and behold, he had passed the time by eating apples.*

Despite all this, Felix is said to have been a good student. Just like all the Schlessinger children, he initially attended

the "Bondi" school, i.e. the educational institution for the succession community, founded in 1859. They all received their basic education there, after which the sons moved on to the grammar school, while the daughters attended the girls' secondary school.

While Max Schlessinger's eldest son, Gustav, was destined for a career as a rabbi, Felix was to succeed his father in the banking business. That's why, after successfully completing the "Untersekunda", i.e. the 10th grade, he was sent to Frankfurt at the age of about 16 to complete an apprenticeship with the bankers Katzenstein & Benjamin. Felix, who was perhaps slightly spoiled, had rather a difficult time in Frankfurt, as his sister Sophie tells us: *Felix was probably not too docile an apprentice. He got into an argument with one of his superiors at the bank and, in a fit of rage and injured pride, threw an inkwell at his head. A fully trained apprentice became a clerk after three years. The man whom Felix had argued with was one of these clerks. In his indignation, the clerk wrote a letter of complaint to my father about his son. My father went to visit the clerk S.C. (Simon Carlebach from Lübeck; Father was a rabbi there) and calmed him down.*

Despite his apprenticeship in Frankfurt, Felix probably returned to his parents' house all the time – after all, Mainz is just 35 km from Frankfurt as the crow flies and, in the 1870s, there were trains running to Frankfurt several times a day. The dance classes and, above all, the Mainz carnival, probably had a major part to play here, as Sophie tells us: *At the age of 17, I attended a dance class together with Anna and Felix, which we all loved. And as true Rhinelanders, we also enjoyed the Mainz carnival to the fullest. We had a book club, where we read classics with relish, and there were always guests in our house. On Shrove Tuesday, our cousins from Frankfurt and Hanau came to visit us and it was great. What a hustle and bustle there was as we got into our costumes before the masked ball. We girls, usually 6-8 of us, got ready together in our large parlor, and the room buzzed with excitement and merriment. Although we were fun-loving Rhinelanders, we were all a little shy, and we really looked forward to the freedom of carnival. The Shrovetide carnival started on Saturday evening, with the arrival procession of the Prince and the Princess, and continued until Wednesday. Everyone was swept up in the festivities and the most solemn adults would also take all the ceremonies very seriously... We were young and carefree.*

Even Felix's military service becomes a little adventure in his sister Sophie's descriptions. We don't know exactly when Felix completed his mandatory year of service. What we do know, however, is that he impressed his superiors with his performance. Despite his Jewish faith, as an "Einjähriger" (a one-year soldier) – Felix had completed the Untersekunda, which meant that he did not have to serve for three years, as was otherwise customary – he was promoted to the rank of non-commissioned officer. This was highly unusual, as confirmed by some statistics published in the Frankfurter Zeitung in 1909. These tell us that, since 1880, only a tiny minority of Jewish



Mainz was a fortified city. Here is the Austrian “Hauptwache” (main guardhouse) on Flachsmarkt in Mainz, around 1900. Felix would probably have carried out his guard duties in a guardhouse like this one.

soldiers had made it to the rank of non-commissioned officer. Not a single one was appointed as a reserve officer. Of the 1,500 Jewish “one-year soldiers” who had been baptized, however, 300 conscripts qualified as officers. Sophie writes about her brother’s military service: *There were very few Jewish soldiers, since even one year in the army was considered a year lost. The “one-year soldiers” were also granted other perks that the others did not enjoy. They did not have to sleep in the barracks and they were allowed keep a boy to clean their boots, buttons on their uniform, etc. These were the gentlemen’s standards of the time. How sorry we all felt for our brother Felix when, later, he served his year and had to get up at 5 in the morning! And when he had to stand guard outside Mainz every month, our maid took him a hot lunch, a half-hour trip. We thought that he would starve otherwise. Felix had no great military ambition, but he left with the rank of non-commissioned officer. Although there was no official antisemitism at the time, a Jew could not become an officer except in Bavaria. In Hesse, Jews were also forbidden from entering the civil service, which prompted some particularly ambitious people to get baptized. But even this did not help them under Hitler.*

And there’s another thing we know about Felix: he was, at least in his youth, a staunch Zionist. He would often argue about this with his brother Gustav, whom his sister Sophie describes as an

*intolerant Agudist*. Felix, the younger of the two, seems to have been the pragmatic, though perhaps a little too idealistic, man of action in the family; his older brother Gustav comes across in Sophie’s descriptions as rather an eccentric and naive scholar, and that soon became a problem.

### **Felix Schlessinger Joins Leo Hamburger’s Coin Dealership**

This is because, on June 4, 1896, Max Schlessinger died at the age of just 61 following cancer surgery. The family’s grief for their beloved father wasn’t the only sentiment pervading the entire household. There was also the fear of losing their position in society, since the eldest son Gustav, despite his 21 years, was not ready and perhaps also not able to take over management of his father’s bank right away. He first completed his studies in Würzburg, earning his doctorate in 1898 with a dissertation on “*Die altfranzösischen Wörter im Machsor Vitry. Nach der Ausgabe des Vereins ‘Mekize Nirdamim’*” (English: “The Old French Words in the Machsor Vitry”. Based on the edition from the ‘Mekize Nirdamim’ society”). After that, he worked as a trainee at the Gebr. Stern bank in Hanau and at Gutman in Stuttgart, while his father’s bank was already in free fall. The Schlessingers’ bank was in the red, despite the fact that all the



*Frankfurt – photograph of an airship from 1911. Photo: Carl Sauerwein.*

daughters had immediately and enthusiastically taken on work in the back rooms, since the family could no longer afford to pay employees to do it. Sophie writes about it: *Back then, it was degrading for young ladies to pursue a career. Women could either become nurses or teachers. Any other profession was not considered appropriate for their social status. We girls, however, did not wish to be idle; we helped out in our father's business, but we were only allowed to work in the back room – it would have damaged the company's reputation to be seen there.*

It was not Gustav who saved the family's fortune, but rather an unexpected lottery win: *Besides the banking business, Gustav was also the holder of the state lottery, which involved a lot of writing and kept us all busy with advertising and many other things. Since the lottery was a state matter, and we were therefore employed by the state, we were required to keep the business open on the Sabbath too, which caused a lot of headaches. We found a loophole by hiring an employee in exchange for a share in the company, who would then stay in the back room on the Sabbath.*



*Felix and Hedwig Schlessinger.*

*When the lottery came into our possession, we had massel. The first jackpot was among the lots we distributed, and the lot was unsold. 20,000 marks! That was a great deal of money and, after all the losses we had experienced following our father's death, we really needed the financial help.*

We do not know when exactly the family was blessed with this windfall. In any case Felix Schlessinger could no longer expect to receive a portion of the family fortune to establish himself. Due to a tragic death, he was presented with an alternative: On July 6, 1904, the only son of Leo Hamburger the younger, Siegmund, committed suicide at the age of just 22. In his memoirs, Mark Salton mentions rumors in the family at the time saying Siegmund had taken his life because of an unhappy love. Sophie recounts what happened next as follows: *Soon after our father's death, Felix had barely completed his apprenticeship when my uncle Leo Hamburger, my mother's brother who lived in*

*Frankfurt, suffered a great bereavement. My uncle, my mother's only brother who was very close to us, had three children. His eldest daughter Lotte married David Nussbaum in Frankfurt, and Jenni married Ludwig Groedel, also in Frankfurt. The family's only son, a very talented young man, took his own life at 22 years old. This shook us all to the core. My uncle then asked my mother whether he could take on Felix, both to work with him in the business and to live in the family household. My mother and Felix agreed, and so Felix became part of the Hamburger family.*

It is safe to assume from this passage that Leo Hamburger the younger not only took on his nephew Felix 1904 as a collaborator, but also as a potential heir. It may have been an adoption of sorts, with the aim of securing a male heir – let's not forget that daughters did not yet have equal rights at the time of the German Empire. These conventions were considered quite

normal in the 19th century. Felix Schlessinger must therefore have either already joined Leo Hamburger's company at a much earlier point than previously assumed, or his adoptive father must have arranged to send him to other coin dealerships in order to gain the numismatic skills that he needed.

Felix Schlessinger was not made a partner until 1912, in connection with his marriage in 1911, as Sophie tells us: *When he married, Felix became a partner to his uncle, who was a well-known numismatist.* This position ensured that he would be able to support his family.

Felix had met his wife Hedwig Hindel Feuchtwanger (1891-1944) – a cousin of the writer Lion Feuchtwanger – at the household of his uncle Leo Hamburger, as Sophie also tells us. She was probably there to visit her aunt, that is, Leopold Hamburger's wife Meta.

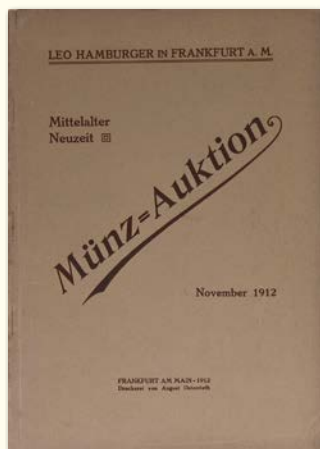
Mark Salton writes the following about his mother's family background: *My mother's clan, the Feuchtwanger lived in Munich to where they had moved from Fürth about a century earlier. Grandfather Louis, in partnership with his brother Siegmund manufactured food products; their plant, on the*

*Grillparzerstrasse, was called Saphir-Werke. One of his kinsmen, Dr. Lewis Feuchtwanger born in Fürth 1805, after graduating from Heidelberg and Jena Universities, migrated to the United States in 1827, where he practiced medicine and opened (1829) a German pharmacy in New York. His claim to numismatic fame derives from his exploits in metallurgy. ... He had developed a copper-nickel-zinc alloy, commonly called "German silver", although Feuchtwanger preferred to name it "American silver."*

Young Hedwig worked in the coin dealership. On top of her native tongue German she spoke English, French, and Italian fluently, thus also stepping in as foreign language correspondence clerk. Mark Salton reports that each and every letter was still handwritten at the time as typewriters were only just starting to enter the market. Plus, every single letter had to be copied for the business's internal records.

David Nussbaum joined the coin dealership at the same time as Felix. Seeing that David was a brilliant storyteller and fantastic with kids, but not really able to secure a living, Leo Hamburger must have seen no other option but to employ him in order to secure the support of his oldest daughter Charlotte Zerle and her children. In his memoirs, Mark Salton puts it like this: *His vocation was clearly artistic, while he considered numismatics his duty.*

We have two descriptions of the business premises from that time. Erich Cahn remembers: *Customers would find a very fine business, also looking the part, with dark and gloomy rooms in the ground floors of the Scheffelstraße.* Mark Salton provides a more detailed account: *The office on the first floor, "parterre" as it was called, looked like out of a Charles Dickens novel. It consisted of a flight of high-ceiling rooms of varied sizes, mostly lined with book cases, numerous large and small wooden coin cabinets and*



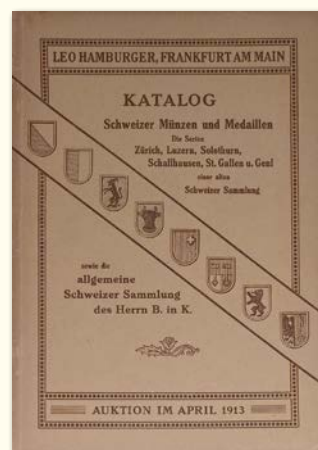
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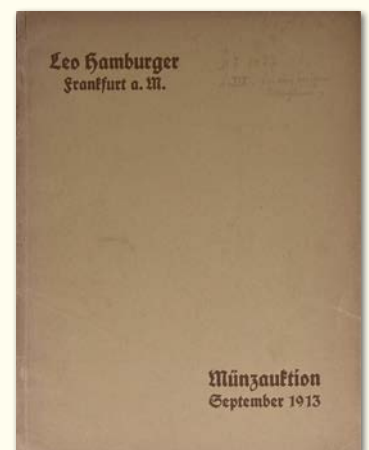
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*Catalogs from Leo Hamburger's company from 1912 and 1913.*

*From Künker auction 357 (December 7-9, 2021)*

*German soldiers  
during a gas attack  
in Flanders, 1917.*



several safes. The felt-covered tables, surmounted by green lamp shades, were strategically placed near the windows and cluttered with paper work, coin trays, catalogues, more books and the like. The exception was the reception room; here in impressive, somewhat formal surroundings, a library in fine bindings was neatly kept in two large glass-enclosed ebony book cases for use by clients. Herr Schnerb, Herr Hufnagel and three secretaries all were long-time employees.

In this context, Mark Salton also explains why the catalogues from the 1920s featured few pictures: *Mr. Hufnagel was an accomplished expert in plaster casts of coins and medals needed for the production of plates. Photography of the coins themselves, as we know it today, had not yet been developed. The plaster casts were mounted on cardboard sheets to be reproduced by the photogravure method, a system both time-consuming and expensive, which accounts for the relatively small number of illustrations of that era.* The photogravure technique was a precursor of modern intaglio printmaking which allowed for real half-tones. The copper plate which was used as the printing plate for the catalogue was modeled directly on the negative in multiple work-intensive processing steps in which gelatin and acid played a central role.

The coin dealership now had to support three families and their households. Could it be a coincidence that, exactly when Felix Schlessinger and David Nussbaum joined the company, the

number of auctions held by Leo Hamburger's coin dealership increased considerably? Whereas there was just one auction, two at the most, between 1905 and 1911, there were four auctions held in 1912 and then another four in 1913.

### **Felix Schlessinger in the First World War**

And then the First World War began. Felix Schlessinger was a reserve non-commissioned officer and was involved in the fighting from the very start, as his sister reports: *Felix fought in that first war from the first day in 1914 until November 1918. He was not spared any horrors on the front line. He was wounded, buried alive, and poisoned.* Mark Salton remembers that his father fought at the Western Front, amongst other at the Battle of Verdun. He was wounded severely twice, but, as if by some miracle, survived. Sophie Diamant tells us: *The military withdrawal had almost worn him out completely, but providence (as well as some help from my brothers-in-law) had brought him to Posen, where he lay "sick" in a military hospital as the war ended. But even the Iron Cross he was awarded during the war could not save him from Hitler.*

Sophie, our reporter, knows this first hand. She lived in Posen, where her husband David Diamant (1875-1931) and his partner had established a chocolate and confectionery factory with around 400 employees. David, as an influential factory owner,



*Landesjustizvollzugsanstalt Münster, the prison from which Felix Schlessinger freed his brother-in-law Ernst Wachtel.*

*Photo: Dietmar Rabich/Wikimedia Commons/"Münster, Justizvollzugsanstalt -- 2014 -- 8284"/CC BY-SA 4.0*

therefore had the necessary connections to save his brother-in-law from having to return to the front line.

Felix Schlessinger probably would have stayed in Posen for even longer if he hadn't received a call for help from his sister Rosel. She had married the liberal Viennese engineer Ernst Wachtel – against the wishes of her strict brother Gustav, who made the lovers wait for seven long years for his blessing. Sophie describes Ernst as a *very kind and clever person. Tall, good-looking, blond. He had studied bridge engineering in Vienna, and then when he married, he accepted the post of director at a machine factory in Wittlich, a little town in the Eiffel region with a population of 5,000.*

Of course, during the First World War, this factory was also converted for armaments production. It produced grenades. In 1916, there was an incident, which we'll recount in Sophie's words: *Ernst had a foreman who was not well disposed toward him. This foreman smuggled duds into the batches of grenades to be delivered. This led to the arrest of the factory foreman, but as the responsible director, Ernst also had to pay the price. They*

*were both arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison, as the offense was regarded as high treason.*

Sophie eloquently describes the horrors of Ernst Wachtel's imprisonment. The only reason he didn't starve in prison was because a sympathetic rabbi smuggled food, painstakingly financed by the family, into the prison, risking his own life in the process. The way in which Felix managed to get his brother-in-law out of prison is an incredible story that sounds just like a scene from the Captain of Köpenick: Ernst spent two and a half years in the convalescent hospital, remaining there until the end of the war. His release was rather dramatic. Only those who lived through this time can imagine the chaos that followed the end of the war. There were workers' councils and soldiers' councils and everything was going haywire. Felix, as a discharged soldier, went with two of his comrades to the prison in Münster in Westphalia, where Ernst was serving his sentence, and demanded the immediate release of the prisoner, and it worked.



*Polish troops enter Posen.*

His release must have been a rare moment of happiness in a terrible time, because Germany was now being ravaged by Spanish flu. The disease also claimed numerous victims among the members of the Hamburger and Schlessinger families: Felix's sister Anna, married Eschwege (1877-1920), died on January 31, 1920. Her husband and their six-year-old child were so gravely ill at the time that they did not learn of the death of their wife and mother until long after Anna's funeral. Felix's mother and our chronicler Sophie were also infected, but after a long period of illness, they escaped with their lives. Sophie had barely recovered when she was dealt the next twist of fate, whose consequences would also affect the life of Leo Schlessinger.

In the Treaty of Versailles, the German government not only conceded Alsace-Lorraine and West Prussia, but also the province of Posen, where David and Sophie Diamant lived. David must have already been planning to relocate his chocolate factory during the negotiation stage, because it was only 1919

when he and his partner Hermann Lewandowski established their new company at Rittergutstraße 33/34 in Lichtenberg. He named the factory "Schokoladen- und Zuckerwarenfabrik Venetia", just like his old one. This location was a clever choice. Lichtenberg was a suburb on the outskirts of the up-and-coming capital Berlin, which was incorporated into the city just two years later in 1921. David Diamant was probably earning even more money after his move to Berlin than he was before!

### **The Decline of the Coin Dealership Leo Hamburger**

Felix Schlessinger returned to Frankfurt after the First World War to continue working for Leo Hamburger's business. Returning to a civilian lifestyle after years of war cannot have been easy on him either. That he wasn't the only one who felt like that shows the tense atmosphere at international auctions – here described by Mark Salton: *In 1923 ... Father attended the auction of the Enrico Caruso collection which took place at the*

1 Goldmark = Papiermark (nominal)	Datum	Briefporto in Mark <sup>[7]</sup>	Dollarkurs in Mark <sup>[8]</sup>
1	1. Juli 1914		4,20
2	31. Januar 1918	0,15	
4	31. Januar 1919	0,15	
10	31. Januar 1920	0,20	42,00
30	31. Januar 1921	0,40	60,43
100	3. Oktober 1921	0,60	127,37
200	31. Januar 1922	2,00	199,40
1.000	21. Oktober 1922	6,-	4.439,-
10.000	31. Januar 1923	50,-	49.000,-
100.000	26. Juni 1923	100,-	760.000,-
1.000.000	8. August 1923	1.000,-	4.860.000,-
10.000.000	7. September 1923	75.000,-	53.000.000,-
100.000.000	3. Oktober 1923	2.000.000,-	440.000.000,-
1.000.000.000	11. Oktober 1923	5.000.000,-	5.060.000.000,-
10.000.000.000	22. Oktober 1923	10.000.000,-	32.150.000.000,-
100.000.000.000	3. November 1923	100.000.000,-	418.950.000.000,-
	9. November 1923	1.000.000.000,-	628.500.000.000,-
<sup>[9]</sup> 600.000.000.000 Währungsreform 1.000.000.000.000	15. November 1923	1 RPF = 10.000.000.000,-	4,20 RM = 4.200.000.000.000,-
(kursive Werte wurden math. interpoliert)		Porto ab 1. Dezember <sup>[10]</sup> 10 RPF	

Table showing the dwindling value of the German mark between 1918 and 1923.

Source: Wikipedia.

*Brothers Canessa in Naples. Passionate feelings from the war years, still strong, were reflected in the seating arrangements: American, British, French and Belgian bidders on one side of the isle, Germans and Austrians on the other, with those from the host country strategically placed in the middle.* How closely entangled national preferences and international trading had become already before the First World War shows in the fact that the renowned tenor of the Metropolitan Opera, Enrico Caruso, preferred dealing with coin dealers from his home town Naples rather than with American coin dealerships, which were definitely already around then. The Canessa brothers had a premises in New York at 145 Fifth Avenue and in Paris at 15 Avenue des Champs Elysees.

Was Felix Schlessinger able to buy much in this legendary auction? Probably not. The drastic depreciation posed a seemingly insurmountable problem for all German coin dealers. Let's remember that back then there were no bailout packages for failed business owners, which puts a different complexion on the foundation of the infamous cartel about which Erich Cahn writes in his article on the Frankfurt coin trade. What Cahn doesn't say in his text is that this cartel probably saved the Frankfurt coin dealerships from ruin. This, however, might well be due to the fact that he was only ten years old in 1923 and the business owners presumably did not want to worry their children by telling them how serious the situation was.

But let's first remember the facts here: Right after the onset of the First World War, the government of the German Reich

overturned the convertibility of bank notes into gold. That meant it had a carte blanche to print as much money as was required to wage the war. Already during the war, the enormous increase in money supplies lead to the rapid depreciation of the mark compared to the dollar. If you had paid 4.20 marks for a dollar on July 1, 1914, you were already paying 42 marks for it on January 31, 1920. Relative to that, domestic prices had increased much less in the same time. Postage, just to name one example, was only 30% more than it had been at the beginning of war. In other words: German coin dealers who tried to buy abroad had to pay ten times more than before for their goods, and vice versa: British and American dealers were now at a huge advantage when buying at German auctions. And this advantage grew and grew. We know how it ended: On November 15, 1923, the day that the Rentenmark set an end to the inflation, a dollar cost 4,200,000,000,000 marks (4.2 trillion!).

We can infer from a remark by Mark Salton what this meant for an auction house. Illustrating this with the auction of

the fourth part of the collection of Karl Adolph Bachofen von Echt in January 1921, he describes how rapidly the inflation was eating up their profits: *in the fourth of these auctions the greatest rarities sold at prices which a few month later would buy a street car ride.*

And that meant that not only dealers were suffering losses but auctioneers were getting into dire straits, too. After all, who was willing to sell coins in these conditions? While Leo Hamburger had regularly conducted four auctions a year before 1921, only a single auction was held in 1922 and, in 1923, not one; auctions only resumed in 1924. But these auctions were crucial to secure the livelihood of the three families of Leo Hamburger, Felix Schlessinger, and David Nussbaum, not to forget the families of their employees. Erich Cahn reports how a coin dealership in the 1930s worked to turn a profit: *At least two auctions per annum as well as extensive stock catalogues, not to forget a steady stream of so-called "walk-ins."* But in 1923 the auctions stopped. The "walk-ins" most likely did not sell anything anymore either. If Leo Hamburger wanted to put food on the table for himself, his family, and all the other people who depended on him, he had to turn to his stock and do what no sensible man would do in this economic situation: trade stable-value coins for paper money.

You have to keep in mind how desperate the situation was when you read that, in 1921, the Frankfurt coin dealership Leo Hamburger merged with the Munich coin dealership Otto Helbing. As Erich Cahn writes, this merger was extended again: *At the time of inflation, around 1921, Hamburger and Helbing*



*Felix Schlessinger  
at work.*

*had already become associates, who were joined by Cahn in 1923, while Hess and Rosenberg joined them during the currency reform at the latest, i.e. in the beginning of 1924. The same year, Hamburger left the community again, apparently because the Vogel object promised to yield higher profits when taken on by himself. The other four, however, remained united almost until the point where the period covered by this article ended [1943, author's note], in spite of all internal difficulties.*

It is only thanks to this close collaboration, which had the different Frankfurt coin dealerships act more or less like a single coin dealership with different branches, that all businesses survived the – and those are Erich Cahn's words again – *terrible economic crisis around 1930*.

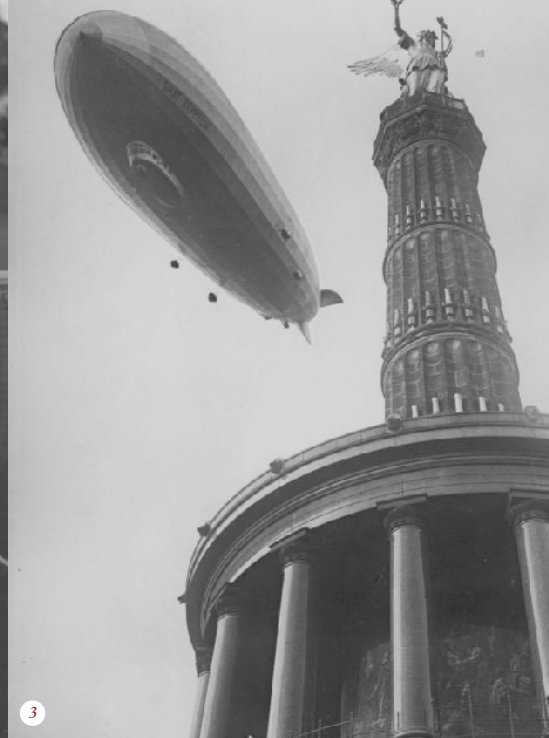
This measure seems even more sensible if you remember how closely the business owners knew each other or were related to each other: Adolph Hess had married a cousin of Leo Hamburger and Adolph E. Cahn had been an apprentice to Leo Hamburger. And that is probably but the tip of the iceberg, seeing that the genealogy of Jewish coin trading dynasties as well as their apprenticeships has still not been researched sufficiently.

Here, we hear from Erich Cahn how the collaboration between coin dealerships worked on a practical level: It was a regular cartel, in fact, it was actually a single business which, unnoticed by the outside, effectively dominated the majority of the German coin trade, because the secret of this business was well-kept. A condition which was a blessing, particularly when it came to buying as well as to taking in large objects on consignment. Last but not least, it was this collaboration which made survival possible in the hard times after the economic crisis of 1930.

The transactions, which you can imagine were not easy, were conducted in such a manner that each object was registered in a common account (and accordingly on the coin tags), the receipts exactly divided by four, apart from one fourth which went to the selling business alone, as did the receipts from goods on consignment. Important past, guidelines, and future prospects were discussed in regular weekly meetings.

In 1924 the coin dealership Leo Hamburger left the consortium. Cahn believes, like it says above, because Leo Hamburger preferred taking on the Vogel collection alone. Mark Salton sees this differently. He accuses his uncle Leo of stubbornly resisting everything which might have saved the company assets: Uncle Leo, like so many of his generation, could not comprehend that the "good German Imperial Mark" was collapsing and stubbornly opposed anything that might have saved the firm's assets. When it was all over in 1924, only a shadow of its former financial strength remained.

That is probably the reason why Felix Schlessinger moved to Berlin and opened his own coin dealership here. The Frankfurt business didn't generate enough of a profit to feed everyone who depended on it. And so there was nothing to inherit for Felix Schlessinger, who had originally come to Frankfurt in order to eventually take over his uncle's coin dealership. He had to start all over again in Berlin, even though he still occasionally collaborated with the coin dealership Leo Hamburger: After the company's founder died, for instance, he auctioned off the M. Frankiewicz / Posen collection of Polish coins and medals together with David and Hans Nussbaum on September 15, 1930, in Berlin.



## Berlin - Roaring Twenties

1 Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova dances at a ball.

2 German tennis player Hans Moldenhauer (right) wins the Davis Cup.

German Federal Archives Image 102-00544A

3 Count Zeppelin flies over the Berlin Victory Column. German Federal Archives, Image 102-06615

4 A large cinema in Berlin with 2,025 seats

5 NSDAP election meeting at the Sportpalast arena. German Federal Archives, Image 102-10391

6 The Comedian Harmonists

7 Inauguration of the new synagogue in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. German Federal Archives, Image 102-10414

8 Lesser Ury, a view of the Brandenburg Gate from Pariser Platz



*The Werner-Siemens-Realgymnasium was, during the time it was attended by Max Schlessinger, a well-known progressive school with a high percentage of Jewish students. Photo: Irakli/Wikimedia Commons*

## Felix Schlessinger Finds His Own Coin Dealership in Berlin

While what is *perhaps the most important coin dealership not just in Frankfurt, but, for a time, in the whole of Germany* – as Erich Cahn describes Leo Hamburger's coin dealership in his article on the Frankfurt coin trade – was kept running by an ageing Leo Hamburger, his artist / son-in-law David Nussbaum and David's son Hans, a trained numismatist, Felix Schlessinger moved his area of business to booming, promising Berlin in 1928, where there was less competition than in Frankfurt. It is likely that he took his customer file from Frankfurt with him so that he could count on a number of regular customers right from the start. Erich Cahn tells us *that the customer file of such a business would have held around a thousand addresses, of which of course only some two thirds could be regarded as actual buyers.*

There were also personal reasons that made the move to Berlin even more appealing. After all, in 1928, this city was home to the families of his two sisters Sophie and Rosel, whose husband Ernst Wachtel Felix had freed from prison through his plucky intervention. His brother-in-law David Diamant was also a good customer, as Sophie reports: *My husband, who had also started collecting coins, stood by him as a friend in countless situations.* You can well imagine how the siblings would have enjoyed getting together at the uproarious family reunions – attended by up to 60 people, Sophie tells us – and reminiscing about the good old days back home in Mainz.

We know from his son Mark Salton that Felix Schlessinger didn't have enough money to get set up in the usual, elegant style: *Our Berlin office was located in the borough of Charlottenburg, Bismarckstrasse 97/98, an eight-lane tree-lined street, part of the main artery leading West from the Brandenburg Gate. The six-story building had two large apartments of c. 12 rooms on each floor, and the landlord agreed to subdivide our apartment into a residential section of eight rooms, and an office part of 4 rooms. Father, the two secretaries Fräulein Wachtel and Fräulein Fröhlich, each occupied one room, while the spacious foyer served as both reception and auction room.*

Of course, Felix Schlessinger did not go to Berlin alone. He was followed by his wife Hedwig and his two sons, the elder Max, aka Mark Salton, born January 12, 1914, and the younger Paul, born January 11, 1918.

So, at the age of 14, Max Schlessinger moved from Frankfurt to Berlin, where he attended the Werner-Siemens-Realgymnasium, a renowned progressive school in Berlin's Bavarian Quarter. In 1928, the school comprised 27 classes with a total of 914 students and 40

teachers. Over half of its students came from upper middle-class Jewish families. The most famous graduate of this school is probably Marcel Reich-Ranicki (1920-2013), the influential literary critic.

Max Schlessinger then enrolled at the Berlin Handelshochschule (Berlin School of Economics) at Spandauer Straße 1, where the Jewish economist Moritz Julius Bonn served as rector. At the same time, Max completed a traineeship at the Berlin private bank E.G. Kaufmann in the semester break. And of course, Max came into contact with the world of numismatics from a very early age, as Ira Rezak reports in his obituary: *Therefore, even as a teenager, he was intimately familiar with the rich and sophisticated coin trade that was typical in Germany and, indeed, throughout Europe at that time. He gained this know-how by associating with and learning from the many numismatically educated collectors and museum experts who were in constant contact with the coin dealerships of the Hamburger and Schlessinger companies. Later, Mr. Salton would often fondly recall meetings with such prominent figures as Leonard Forrer, the Grunthals, Henry Seligman, Dr. Richard Gaettens, Dr. Jakob Hirsch, Prof. Kurt Regling, Chief Curator of the Berlin Coin Cabinet, and many other [figures] of the pre-war period, with a level of accuracy that reveals his extraordinary memory for numismatic details.*

Max Schlessinger was raised a strict Orthodox. Mark Salton remembers that his father Felix wasn't willing to make concessions in favor of his own profits: *A customer known to every numismatic firm was Count von Lehndorff-Steinort, an avid collector and great connoisseur of coins of Brandenburg and the Balticum, whose family owned one of the largest agricultural holdings in East Prussia. His father ... had placed the family fortune in a trust, leaving the son with a monthly allowance large enough to keep him out of the soup kitchen, but not quite sufficient for "the good life". ... The young count consequently owed money to every coin dealer on the continent. Once he appeared with us on a Saturday morning and ... announced he had come to settle a long overdue account. After being told by Father that he was welcome as a visitor, but that on the Sabbath no business could be conducted or discussed, the count nodded understanding and proposed to simply place the money on the table and then leave. Father had to tell him that such circumvention was not feasible either and instead invited him for "Mittagessen" the next day. Later on we learned that the count spread the word that Herr Schlessinger was so religious that on Sabbath he would not accept money "not even from a debtor as difficult as me".*

Thanks to the memoirs of Mark Salton, we also learn something about the auctions during the Berlin years. Among the items auctioned were, among others, coins and medals from the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, where the Communist government was systematically nationalizing artwork for export in order to generate foreign currencies. Mark Salton remembers two very important buyers at this auction: *During the exhibition days a Berlin banker, not known to be a numismatist, requested to be shown two extremely rare papal gold coins, a three-zecchine-piece ND of Nicholas V (1444-1455), and a four-zecchini-piece 1598 of Clemens VIII (1592-1605), struck in Avignon. He intimated to be acting on behalf of a royal patron, as it turned out, Victor Emanuel III. Also a priest wished to view those same two coins; he identified himself as a functionary of the Berlin Archdiocese which had received instructions from the curator of the Vatican Collection. In the auction, the King outbid the Vatican on the three-zecchini-piece of Nicholas, while the Milanese collector*

*Carlo Gavazzi outbid both King and Vatican on the four-zecchini of Clemens. (Note by the author: The diocese of Berlin was founded in 1930; it became an archdiocese only in 1994.)*

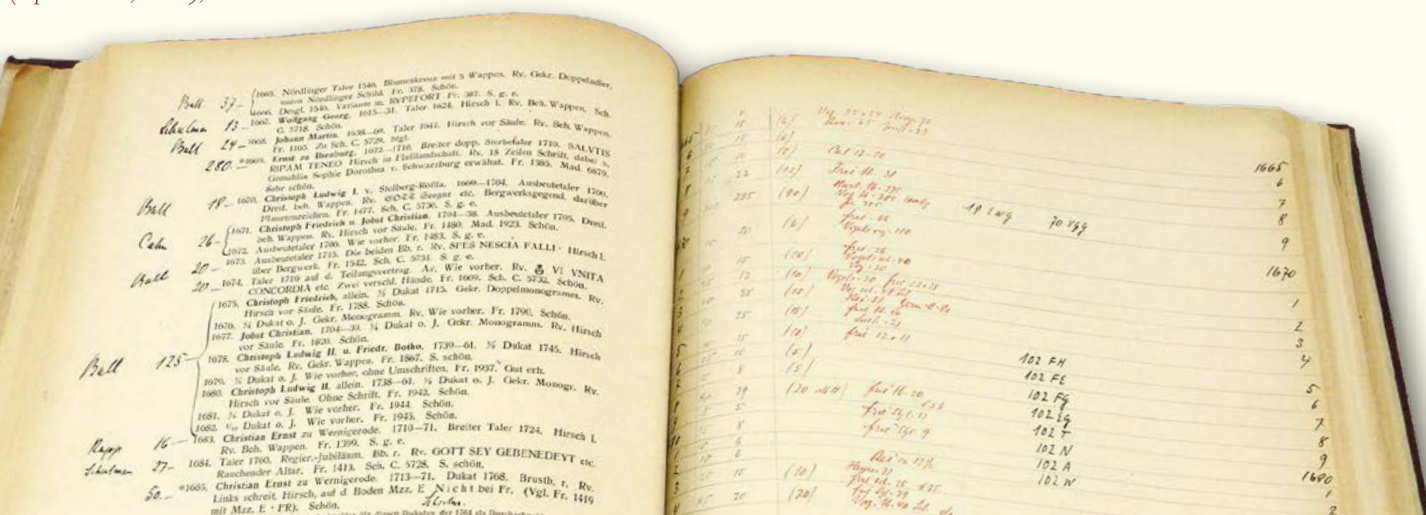
Even more entertaining is the way Mark Salton describes scenes from the auction room: *The fourth part [auctioned off on February 4, 1935] consisted of 1655 lots of Greek coins. The largest buyer in that auction was Leonhard Forrer Sr. of Spink, London, who held bids not only from English collectors and the British Museum but also from Dr. Jacob Hirsch settled in Geneva. Hirsch refused after 1933 to set foot into Germany. Another participant was the then only lady coin dealer in Germany, Miss Hildebrand, a middle-age lady from the Black Forest. When Fräulein Hildebrand came sailing into the room, decked out in all her finery, proceedings had to be halted for a minute or so, to allow the gentlemen to catch their breath. Then there was Mr. Bernheimer of the well-known art dealer family representing film actor Heinz Rühmann, who bought a number of high-quality coins; each piece had to have a particular merit, be it rarity outstanding style, or preservation. All in all this auction was remarkable for its large proportion of floor versus mail bid sales.*

And that in spite of the fact that the fourth auction with coins from the Hermitage almost would not have happened: *The coins for these auctions had been delivered to us by the Hermitage curators at the Russian Embassy in Berlin, where most of the prior negotiations had taken place. When it came to the material for the fourth auction, their price ideas were so unreasonable, unrelated to market reality, that after a day's discussion Father asked to be excused from that consignment. A few days later the comrades had a change of mind and were agreeable to refrain from placing limits. Thereafter matters proceeded in a business-like manner.*

All in all it can be said that, after relocating from Frankfurt to Berlin, Felix Schlessinger became fully established there in the course of only a few years. As soon as 1930, four auctions were held in which major objects like the Edmund Nordheim collection and the already mentioned Frankiewicz collection were dissolved. Felix Schlessinger would have probably become one of the prime coin dealers in Germany, if Germany had been spared the National Socialism and persecution of Jews.

*Felix Schlessinger's personal copies for his Berlin auctions.*

*Photo: Kolbe & Fanning in cooperation with Künker, Sale 161, The Numismatic Library of Mark and Lottie Salton (September 18, 2021), Lot 424.*



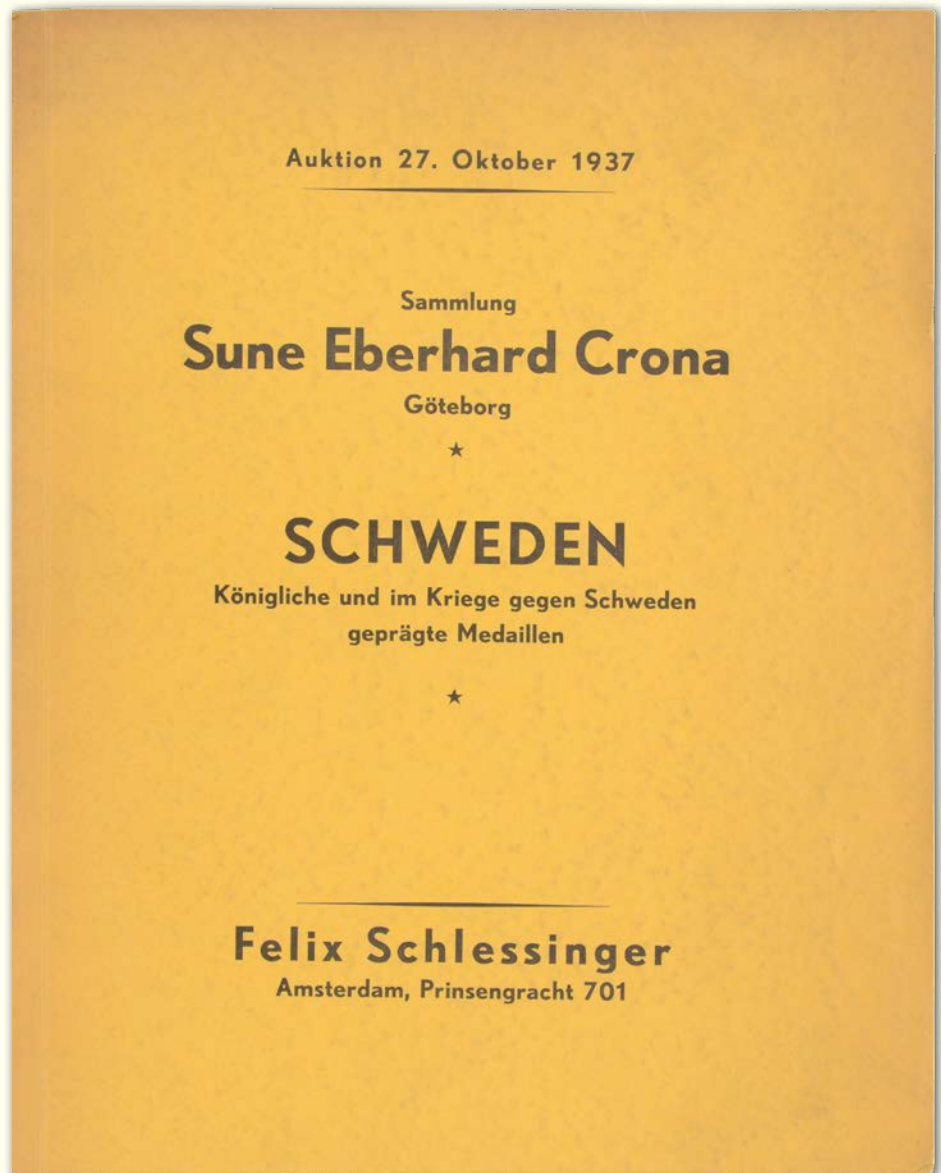
## Antisemitism Turns Into Persecution

On January 30, 1933, Paul von Hindenburg appointed Adolph Hitler as Reich Chancellor. With that, Germany was taken over by a party that also owed its success to its public commitment to antisemitism, which was widespread at the time. When we look back on that time today, we may occasionally wonder why German Jews didn't start leaving right then in 1933, when it still would have been relatively easy to do so. Sophie Diamant answers this question as follows: *Of course, in 1933, emigrating would have been a very simple matter, and I would have been able to take my belongings with me, but it did not occur to anybody in our family to do so, and since I was not being harassed at all, I stayed. Over the years, driven by the events that unfolded, people started to leave one after the other.*

Indeed, the net of antisemitic rules, regulations, and laws was drawing ever tighter. From April 1, 1933, SA pickets stood in front of many Jewish stores to deter any potential buyers. The state-imposed boycott of Jewish businesses did not stop many people from shopping at their usual stores, but there wasn't any open opposition to this practice either. In the same month, 5,000 Jewish civil servants were dismissed – only those who had fought on the front line in the First World War were granted a grace period first. Again, there probably wasn't any widespread protest against this move because it enabled many unemployed non-Jewish academics to find work.

As a result of these major acts of hate, but also especially the countless minor ones, a quarter of all independent Jewish businesses were forced to give up by mid-1935. And by mid-1938, this figure had already reached 70%. But by that time, Felix Schlessinger had already left Germany with his family. Sophie explains that it was the Nuremberg Laws that prompted him to go to the Netherlands: *In 1935, once Hitler's laws had come into force, he could no longer continue to run the business that he had built up so successfully. He moved to Amsterdam with his wife and two sons, Max and Paul.*

In fact, it may have been a little more complicated than that. Johannes Schwartz wrote an essay describing the discrimination experienced by the Jewish coin dealer Dr. Philipp Lederer in Berlin in the years following 1933. From this account, we can probably assume that Felix Schlessinger would have been subjected to the same harassment.



*Auction catalog for Auction 14 at Felix Schlessinger's coin dealership, his first auction no longer held in Berlin but rather in Amsterdam in October 1937. From Künker auction 357 (December 7-9, 2021), Lot 4631.*

It may have started with the "Reichskulturkammergesetz" ("Law of the Reich Culture Chamber") of September 22, 1933, which placed all cultural activity under the supervision of the state. This law not only affected writers and painters, but also art dealers, and coin dealers came under this category, too. Every art dealer had to be a member of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts, otherwise they could not work in their profession. At the slightest misdemeanor, Jewish members and political suspects were immediately expelled from the chamber and effectively banned from working. As of August 4, 1934, an "Aryan certificate" was theoretically a requirement for membership, but for economic reasons, the president of the Reichsbank Hjalmar Schacht made exceptions for all those who were operating on the international market, and therefore securing economic benefits and, most importantly, foreign currency for Germany. Philipp Lederer belonged to this group, and we may assume that the same also applied to Felix Schlessinger.

16 mars 1936

# Max Schlessinger

Numismate  
Amsterdam

Leidsche Kade 83

Leidsche Kade 83

Liste 1

Les prix sont notés en florins des Pays-Bas.  
Les frais d'expédition à la charge des acheteurs.

1936

## Livres numismatiques.

- 1 Allöldi, Andreas. Der Untergang der Römerherrschaft in Pannonien. 1926. 2 vol. 11 planches. broché. 2.—
- 2 — Il tesoro di Nagyvárad. 1921. 1 pl. broché. 1.—
- 3 — Victories of the Emperor Gallienus. 1929. 9 pl. broché. 2.—
- 4 — Die Prägungen des Gallienus in Siscia. 1931. 7 pl. 4°. broché. 3.—
- 5 — The Helmet of Constantine und ihre Schicksale im germ.-römischen broché. 1.50
- 6 — Eine spätromische Helmform und ihre Schicksale im germanischen Hals-Mittelalter. 1934. 10 pl. 4°. broché. 2.—
- 7 — Nachahmungen römischer Goldmedaillons als germanischer Hals-schmuck. Bud. 1933. 7 pl. 4°. broché. 2.—
- 8 — 10 brochures sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 9 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 10 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 11 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 12 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 13 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 14 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 15 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 16 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 17 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 18 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 19 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 20 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 21 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 22 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 23 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 24 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 25 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—
- 26 13 Monographies sur la numismatique antique, Alex leif (2). — Ass-ens. 3.—

their membership. This was not possible for Felix Schlessinger or for Philipp Lederer. Leaving the country was the only alternative. Perhaps Felix was lucky at least in the fact that he managed to transfer part of his stock and his fortune to Amsterdam, because it wasn't until December 1936 that the state began to monitor the transfer of assets, in order to bleed dry all those who wanted to leave the country.

## A New Beginning and the End in Amsterdam

Of course Felix Schlessinger would have loved to emigrate to the United States, as we know from his son Mark Salton's memoirs, but the wait list for this popular destination was long. Only the Netherlands were willing to immediately take in refugees. So Felix Schlessinger applied for emigration to Amsterdam. He paid a high price for it. Mark Salton reports that while the Schlessinger family managed to move their library to the Netherlands, the coins in stock at the dealership had to be deposited at the Reichsbank for screening first. They were in danger of having their entire stock confiscated, so it must have come as a great relief to them when they learned six months later that the coins had been cleared by the Reichsbank and would be sent on to them. All of their assets at the bank, however, had been confiscated under the guise of excuses such

as Reich Flight Tax or currency regulation.

Thus, Felix Schlessinger had lost his means of existence a third time: First after his father's death, then due to the hyperinflation and Leo Hamburger's inability to adapt to changing circumstances, and now once more due to the National Socialists. And yet the Schlessingers were determined to start over and build a new life in Amsterdam. Mark Salton writes: *In 1936 we applied at the Amsterdam police for resident status; I remember my first call there, when the officer who issued a one-year permit added benevolently: "when you come to me next year I expect you to address me in Dutch; and so I did."*

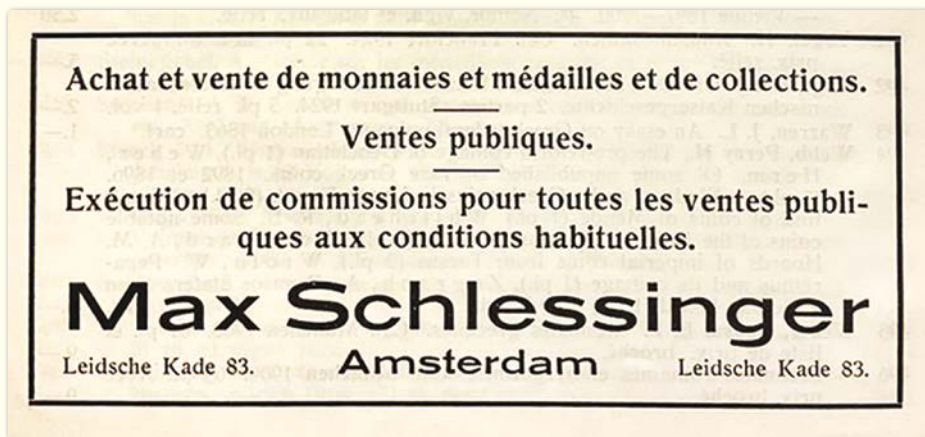
It is an incredible personal achievement on Felix Schlessinger's part that he managed to establish himself as a coin dealer in Amsterdam within such a short space of time. He had help. Ira Rezak's obituary for Max Schlessinger-Salton mentions, in particular, Hans Maurits Frederick Schulman (1876-1943), the son of the founder of the coin dealership "Schulman", Willem Karel Frederik Zwierzina (1880-1942), head of the coin cabinet of the Amsterdam Museum, and Adolph Octave Van Kerkwijk, director of the Royal Coin Cabinet, who expressed his political beliefs by no longer writing out his first names, and instead simply operating as "A.O. van Kerkwijk". By October 1937, Felix Schlessinger's coin dealership was already holding its 14th auction in the new humble business premises at Prinsengracht 701, during which the collection of the Swedish coin collector Crona was sold. There is a good reason why the collection was Swedish: Already when in Berlin, Schlessinger had systematically expanded his circle of Scandinavian customers by going on a round trip of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland once a year.

Max Schlessinger's first fixed price list, dated 1936; we don't know who wrote the date "16. März 1936" (16 March 1936) in ink.

During this time, it seems that the director of the Berlin Coin Cabinet Dr. Kurt Regling was set apart by his solidarity with Jewish coin dealers. Regling continued to buy from Lederer – and probably from the other Jewish coin dealers, too – for the Berlin Coin Cabinet. He was also a close friend of Felix Schlessinger. Regling – by the way, an ardent football fan as we know from Mark Salton – made provisions to sell his library to Felix Schlessinger in his will.

This moral and financial support was greatly appreciated and not without its risks. After all, any "Aryans" who bought from Jewish businesses were publicly shamed in the incendiary Nazi newspaper "Der Stürmer" as "Judenknechte" (servants of the Jews). We have to assume that the sales of Felix Schlessinger's coin dealership dropped drastically and that he would have been forced to close many a deal at a loss in order to get some cash to support his family.

On May 26, 1936, the announcement was issued that all members of the Reich Chamber of Fine Arts had to present evidence of their Aryan origin by September 30 of the same year if they did not want to lose their professional license along with



*Advertisements promoting Max Schlessinger's services as a coin dealer.*

As Ira Rezak writes, Felix Schlessinger would continue to publish catalogs and fixed price lists up to February 1941.

It seems that Max Schlessinger, now 22 years old, had also opened his own coin dealership at Leidsche Kade 83. His first fixed price list exclusively contained numismatic literature. In an advertisement, he describes his areas of business: the purchase and sale of coins and medals, auctions, and auction representation.

But on May 10, 1940, the German army invaded the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The same day, Hedi Schlessinger had had a serious heart attack at 9 o'clock in the evening. She needed a doctor. Mark Salton writes: *All telephone connections, public lightning, street cars etc. were out of service to thwart the enemy, and there was a total curfew. Nevertheless I set out by bicycle to call our doctor (about a mile away) and was promptly stopped by a Dutch army patrol. The officer pointed his pistol at my chest with the words: "you are a German spy, I'll shoot you". I was unable to convince him of my identity, but at last a superior was called who was inclined to believe my story and ordered an army car to drive me to the doctor.*

From David Hill's introductory article to the Salton archive, we know how Max Schlessinger convinced him: *There was an officer among the group who was, as it turned out, of Jewish faith and who demanded that Max proved his Jewishness by citing a chapter from the Book of Genesis in Hebrew. Ever since, he has thanked his orthodox upbringing for saving his life that night.* On May 13, 1940, the Dutch government left the country to form a government-in-exile. The country's highest-ranking officials were ordered by the German occupiers to cooperate with the new government they had installed, which was composed of fanatical Nazis. It was led by Arthur

Seyß-Inquart, a staunch anti-Semite who pleaded guilty at the Nuremberg trials and was executed on October 16, 1946, as a war criminal.

He enacted the first anti-Semitic laws in October 1940 and, to the bewilderment of the Nazi occupiers, this met with open resistance. There were protests and a general strike in Amsterdam, which was brutally suppressed by the occupying forces.

In February 1941, the new Dutch government confiscated all the gold owned by the Schlessingers. One of the first measures taken by the Nazi regime had been to demand that Jewish citizens register the amount of gold in their possession. Now, the authorities were making use of these registers: Felix had to surrender 635 commemorative gold coins, which had significant numismatic value, to the Dutch Central Bank.

Since July 1941, the Nazi regime had long been contemplating what it referred to as the "Final Solution", a euphemism for the murder of countless people of the Jewish faith and of Jewish descent living in Nazi-controlled territory. As early as July 1942, deportations began secretly in the Netherlands. People simply disappeared. They were deported via endless trains to Auschwitz, where they would be killed. In March 1943, Felix and Hedwig Schlessinger were first sent to Westerbork transit camp and from there on to Theresienstadt concentration camp. He and his wife Hedwig were two victims among the 107,000 men, women, and children who were carried away to their deaths by train from the Netherlands. Of all the countries they could have moved to for their life in exile, they chose the one in which more than three quarters of the entire Jewish population would be murdered.



Jews at Westerbork transit camp awaiting deportation to Auschwitz (1942/3). Nationaal Archief.

Schlessinger, Felix M.		21/4/43 Theresienstadt
K 183		4/III/43 U6K
Wissstr. 45	Alten	B 65
18-2-70	Mainz	
statenloos		
gehoofd		
rouw: Sch.- Feuchtranger, Hedwig S. 22.9.91		
23-10-'44 van Ther.		insp: Eisemann
nr. Auschwitz		
TrpA, ET.		
lyst R001-15C- No 1025.		
		23911

An index card from the Amsterdam Judenrat (Jewish Council) documents the transportation of Felix Schlessinger to Auschwitz on October 23, 1944. Photo: ANS/Hill, ANS 2021/3, p. 48, fig. 7.

Felix Schlessinger and his wife Hedwig died on October 25, 1944, in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Given this inhumane cruelty, should we really be thinking about what happened to the things that Felix Schlessinger left behind? Yes, we should, because the efficiency of the procedure illustrates the horror of the Nazi bureaucracy all the more clearly. First, the business premises of the coin dealership Felix Schlessinger were brought under German administration and sealed. Since the owner was no longer available to open the large, heavy vault in his business premises, the trust company Omnia Treuhandgesellschaft, which had been commissioned by the Nazis to liquidate around 13,000 Jewish businesses, sent for two blacksmiths to break into the vault so that the valuable coins could be removed. Paul Schlessinger, who paid a visit to his father's coin dealership after the war, as Mark Salton tells us, found a detailed report of the sacking in the office.

The trustees – if you really want to call them that – arranged for the Reich Commissariat for the Occupied Dutch Territories to send them the opening balance sheets of Felix Schlessinger's coin dealership so that they could check whether all the assets had been found. This is evidenced by a dry file memo, complete with receipt stamp and file number, which would have been written while Felix Schlessinger and his wife Hedwig were detained in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, awaiting the train that would carry them to their deaths. In August 1943, an expert was commissioned to compile a record of Felix Schlessinger's library, which was handed over, together with the expert inventory, in September of the same year to the "Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, Sonderstab Bibliotheken" (Reichsleiter Rosenberg Taskforce, Special Unit for Libraries), a Nazi authority set up for the specific purpose of liquidating looted art. Thus the library ended up in Racibórz in Silesia, although several books had already been stolen before. They resurfaced at a coin dealer in Hamburg and Mark Salton was able to buy them back from him later on.

*List of Felix Schlessinger's library with values, prepared by the expert C. J. Pelle.  
Photo: ANS/Hill, ANS 2021/3, p. 47, fig. 6.*

Vervolg

*C. J. Pelle, beëdigd makelaar en taxateur*

Amsterdam, Bussum

Omschrijving	
Vak 15	transport 2142.--
Head, Historia numorum, 1911.....	10.--
Mionnet, medailles antiques, 1813, 1 tot 4 en 6 en 7.....	5.--
Tudeer, die Tetradrachmenprägung von Syrakus, 1913.....	2,50
Petrowick, Arsaciden Münzen, 1904.....	2,50
Musées impériaux, catalogue des monnaies Ottomanes.....	2.--
Omhoof-Blumer, Varia.....	2.--
Head, coins of Boeotia, 1881.....	2.--
Ward, Greek coins and their parent cities, 1901.....	2.--
Deeche, Münzwesen, 1876.....	2.--
Lederer, die Satterprägung der Stadt Nagidos, 1932.....	2.--
Vak 14	
Head, Principal coins of the creeks, 1932.....	2,50
Gnecchi, l'attivit� numismatica.....	2.--



Memo from the Reich Commissariat, sent with the opening balance sheets of Felix Schlessinger's coin dealership. Photo: ANS/Hill, ANS 2021/3, p. 47, fig. 5.

## The Escape

Max Schlessinger did not share his parents' fate. He was able to flee thanks to the help of courageous people. He has written about this adventure himself, a report that we want to reproduce in full length. The lighthearted tone shouldn't make you forget how arduous the escape was, nor the anxieties he must have suffered. Many other refugees lost their lives on the journey. *All went well, until I received an order in the mail, signed by the notorious Nazi chief Aus der Fünften, directing me to report at the railway station the following day for "Transportation East". I did not follow the order, and Mr. Alexander Wellensiek, head of the Calvinist school system and an acquaintance of Frans Duwaer, offered to hide me and a friend in his office building on Reguliersgracht 18 in the center of Amsterdam. ... While in hiding I tried to put the idle time to some use and compile a numismatic glossary in 5 languages, which proved to be a little cumbersome without being able to consult any literature. Mijnheer Wellensiek sheltered my friend and me for about 4 months, during which time he helped prepare our escape from Holland to join the free Dutch forces in England.*

Photograph of the young Mark Schlessinger at the time he was working for the Dutch embassy in Portugal. Photo: Ira Rezak.



*On September 27, 1942, we (my friend, his fiancée, and I) set out by train to Tilburg where a farmer awaited us with bicycles. During the night we crossed the Belgium border through ditches, wire fences and marshes; in Belgium the resistance movement provided false ID cards which, we were told, were valid in Belgium and the French border region. We crossed into France with the morning*



*Divided France from June 1940 to November 1942.*

*Map: Rama based on a map by Eric Gaba. Wikimedia cc-BY 4.0.*

shift of Belgian mine workers, took a street car to Lille, then a train to Paris, Gare du Nord which was swarming with German security guards; but mixed into the crowd we walked straight past the checkpoint.

In Paris we had an hotel address in the Rue Pigalle where no identities would be checked, a "place" where German officers, in and without uniform, would bring their dates. As instructed we asked for Monsieur Henri who promised to guide us into non-occupied France. Together the four of us took the train to Le Creusot, then a bus to Montceau-les-Mines where Henri disappeared leaving us in the lurch. We entered a little cafe about 8 PM to ask for the way and perhaps obtain some food; the owners were very hostile: "get out quickly, we are afraid, there is curfew; Out!" At that moment the German SS-patrol (2 men) stalked in, did not speak a word of French and thought that we were members of the cafe owner's family. They ordered beer, then another and again another, and after about half an hour they left. Meanwhile a local mineworker had come in who immediately surveyed the situation and signaled with his foot under the table that he would help us. He took us to his house where he lived with his wife and two small children, let us sleep in his kitchen, and at 4 AM we walked together through meadows and hills to a point from where a flagpole with the swastika could be seen on top of a hill. "That's the Demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied France" he said, and "Bonne Chance!", giving the victory sign. We carefully crept up that hill and then ran towards a wooded area about 200 yards downhill, determined not to stop even if they would shoot at us. After half an hour's walking we came to a country road, and a peasant with a horse-drawn haying machine showed us the way to a village called Genouille where the local inn-keeper let us stay over night in his attic.

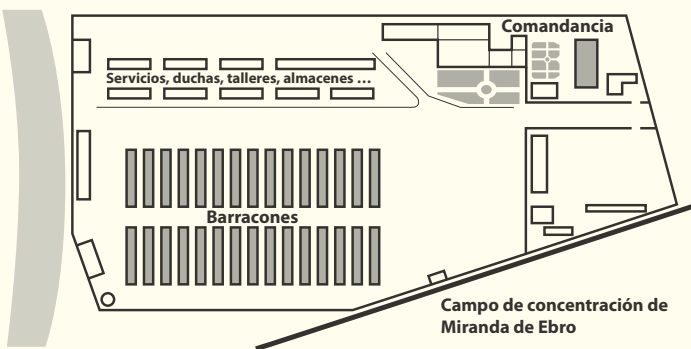
Next day through the villages Le Poulet and St. Gengoux to Macon, and from there by milk train to Lyon. In Lyon there still existed, by the grace of Vichy, an "Office Néerlandais" performing semi-consular functions. We were each given a new ID card with the encouraging remark "Don't ever show it – it won't fly". They also bought us train tickets to Perpignan, an 18-hour ride at that time. In Perpignan we stayed for several weeks, until Southern France as well was occupied by the Nazis who moved a few thousand troops into the town. That same day we obtained from the French Préfecture a so-called "sauf-conduit" authorizing travel on a rattling and rickety bus to a mountain resort called Amélie-les-Bains where at about 7 in the evening the French gendarmerie stopped us. After pleading for solidarity: "Vous êtes français, nous sommes des officiers néerlandais, laissez-nous passer", they said "Allez-y" and that was that.

After a hike of about 36 hours up the Pyrenees in pouring rain, we came to a stone hut with a few goats grazing nearby, and an old man inside confirmed that this indeed was Spain, Catalonia to be exact. After spending a few hours with him, we continued and at about 3 AM came to the village of Massanet-de-Cabrenys where we wanted to give ourselves up at the Guardia Civil station house, but found it closed for the night. There was however a stack of hay in the courtyard where we could sleep for a few hours. At 9 AM someone unlocked the door and we entered. After some linguistic confusion it was arranged to lodge us for a day at the local inn (the size of a railroad car), while the police – the local force consisted of 2 men to assure cover during lunch time – would request instructions on how to handle the case. At 8 AM the next morning the police chief came over to inform us that at 10 AM a car would take us to Figueras. On the way, the chief pointed at a straggling hiker with the words: "that's another one like you; we'll catch him in Figueras."

The police station in Figueras was a flourishing operation. They were hosting a crowd of about 60 young, mostly French, illegal border-crossers, partly locked-up in holding pens originally designed as night lodging for drunks, partly playing cards with the guardians of the Law. After about a week all the men were marched to the railroad station, always 10 chained together ..., for a trip to the internment camp Miranda de Ebro in Northern Spain.

The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco had set up this concentration camp in 1937, following the advice of his National Socialist allies. From 1941, it was run by the German SS Sturmbannführer (lit. "assault unit leader") Paul Winzer. When Max Schlessinger was there in early 1943, the camp, which was designed for 1,500 people, was completely overcrowded with 3,500 prisoners. Mark Salton describes the wretched living conditions in the camp with a joke, which almost makes you forget that the prisoners' life was completely and utterly at the mercy of the guards: The camp held between 2,000 and 3,000 young men, by far the greater part French and Belgian, about 60 Dutch, with a sprinkling of Poles, Yugoslavs, Norwegians, and even a few Britishers, Americans and Canadians ...

Conditions in the camp were somewhat less than what you would find in the "Grand Hotel": Sleeping on cement floors without



*The concentration camp of Miranda de Ebro.*

blankets (during the North-Castilian winter), with roaches, lice and millions of other miniature creatures adding life to the situation. A single water fountain served the entire camp population. Food was sparing, but the Spanish soldiers in the adjoining army camp received the same rations. Every morning the entire camp had to assemble in the square to salute the fascist flag; whoever did not bring the proper salute was taken to the barber shop to have a broad cross cut through his hair. Then followed the daily parade of the ragged inmates to the sound of fascist tunes. There was an infirmary and even a dentist, practicing with antediluvian equipment, mainly a pair of pliers. The one existing "sanitary installation" to stretch the term, dubbed by the inmates "General Franco", be better not recorded here.

There were, however, no atrocities, at least not after 1942, when Allied victory was drawing closer, except for an occasional whack with the rifle butt by a nervous guard. On a July day in 1943 the camp commander, accompanied by his bodyguard, appeared in front of the window-less barrack housing the Dutch group, calling from a list the names of 47 of us, whose release had been negotiated by the Netherlands Embassy with the Spanish Government.

The next morning a contingent of heavily-armed Guardia Civil escorted us to the local railroad station, where it turned out that there was only one daily train to Madrid, making a one-minute stop in Miranda. The station-master warned that the train as usual would be overcrowded, and that he had no locomotive available for moving an empty railroad car parked on a siding, to couple to the arriving train. "No problem" we answered "the 47 of us will handle this minor detail". We encamped ourselves in and around the railroad car, always under the watchful eyes of the Guardia Civil, and, when after a c. 4-hours wait the whistle of an approaching train could be heard, swung into action. The moment the train stopped we pushed the empty car to the main track, after throwing the switch, coupled it to the last wagon of the train, and off we went.

In Madrid a functionary of the Consulate awaited us at the station and brought us to a hotel where we were housed, 6 or 8 in a room. During the next few days the Consulate provided clean basic clothing – and by golly, did we need it – then each of us was thoroughly interrogated by the military attaché at the Consulate, to guard against a possible Trojan Horse. Within c. 2 weeks passports had been prepared and our group was sent to Lisbon.

### A New Beginning

Max Schlessinger had planned to join the Free Dutch Forces, the military formations of the Dutch government-in-exile. But it was not his destiny to face the Germans on the battlefield. The Dutch consul in Lisbon preferred to employ the polyglot and educated young man in the embassy. Max Schlessinger remained there until 1946. For his services, the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina awarded him the "Kruis van Verdienste", an order that honors those who have worked for the good of the Netherlands in the face of the enemy and have proven themselves worthy of it through their courage and decisive action. You didn't need to have been on the front line to receive this honor.



*Wedding of Paul Elchanan Schlessinger and Dr. Ruth Lev Ari Loewenhertz on 21 November 1950 in Haifa, Israel.*

*Photos: Private photos from the family of Paul Elchanan Schlessinger.*

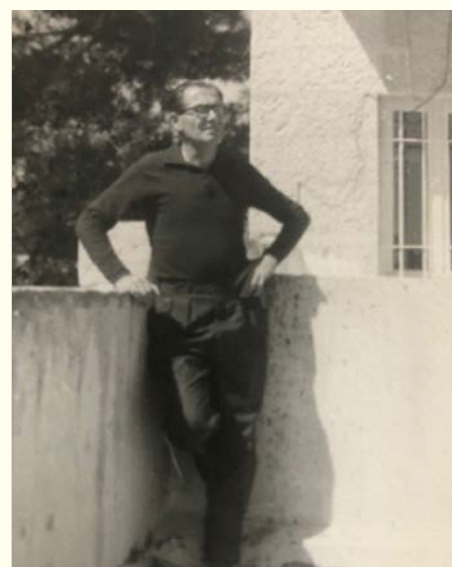
It says a lot about Max Schlessinger's abilities that, after the war, he received an offer to join the diplomatic service of the Netherlands, but he decided against it. When he learned of his parents' death in Auschwitz and heard that his younger brother Paul, who had fought for the British, had emigrated to Palestine, he decided to make a fresh start. Mark Salton writes: *Towards the end of 1945 my American relatives suggested that I come to the States. Since the German immigration quota had remained unused for 5 years, there was practically no waiting period, and ... I decided to cross the Great Pond. In July 1946 I arrived in Baltimore harbor on board the freighter "Wellesley Victory" which had accommodation for up to 10 passengers, but as it turned out the Baltimore Immigration Service had not received my papers. They threatened the American Export Line (owner of the ship) with a hefty fine if I were to jump ship before receiving permission to land. The Export Line consequently hired a detective to watch me 24 hours a day; he introduced himself by showing his hard knuckles and "don't you try anything funny". He was a little fellow; too hard a sneeze might have blown him overboard. But he let me in on a secret: "they gave me plenty pocket money; we are going to have a good time". He slept aboard the ship in a bunk across from mine, always making sure to keep an eye on me. Next morning breakfast in the galley (ship had taken on fresh supplies), then by bus to the Immigration Office: No papers yet, but they promised to telephone Washington and ordered us to come back the next day. In the meantime the detective showed me around Baltimore; we went to the movies, had lunch somewhere, and in the evening back to the ship. Next morning again Immigration Office, with me sitting on pins and*

*needles and him moaning "Oh, how I hate this place". On the third day the papers had arrived and I was allowed to land. We went back to the ship to get my belongings, and I asked the detective for the way to the railroad station to take a train to New York. "No" he said "you can't do that yet" I first want to introduce you to several of my friends. He escorted me to a saloon where his chums were imbibing. "This is my friend Max" he announced "He has just been admitted as an immigrant to the United States, now that deserves a drink, fellows". One in the group, a 7-footer, got up, banged my shoulder that my knees wobbled and said "Welcome Max, and how do you like America?" A new life began, one that Max Schlessinger led under a new name. He called himself Mark Salton now, a decision he has since come to regret, as he himself writes.*



*Paul Elchanan Schlessinger as a soldier of the British Army.*

*Photo: Private photo from the family of Paul Elchanan Schlessinger.*



*Paul Elchanan Schlessinger after the war years and after four years as a prisoner of war.*

*Photo: Private photo from the family of Paul Elchanan Schlessinger.*



*Paul Elchanan Schlessinger and Lottie Salton.*

*Photos: Private photos from the family of Paul Elchanan Schlessinger.*



*The brothers Paul Elchanan Schlessinger and Mark Salton.*

*Photos: Private photos from the family of Paul Elchanan Schlessinger.*

There is an Arabic proverb that says: "You only truly possess that which you cannot lose in a shipwreck." If we take this proverb seriously, Mark arrived in the United States a very rich man: he spoke fluent English, German, French, Italian, and Dutch. During his time in Portugal, he had adopted the mindset of a diplomat. Still, it wasn't easy to capitalize on this education. Mark Salton competed with the millions of GIs who were demobilized after the war. In spite of this, he secured a post. He started working as an analyst in the international department of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, one of the largest banks in New York at the time.

Alongside his daily work, Mark Salton also attended evening courses at New York University, graduating with a Master's in International Banking. The German-Jewish

## Paul Elchanan Schlessinger

(11.1.1918 – 10.7.2001)

Paul Elchanan Schlessinger was born on January 11, 1918 in Frankfurt, the younger brother of Max Schlessinger (Mark Salton). After a childhood and schooling not only in Frankfurt/Main, but also in Berlin and Amsterdam, he managed to escape before the tragic arrest of his parents by the Nazi regime. With the help of friends from the Zionist youth movement Maccabi Hatzair, he reached Palestine by ship. Two weeks after entering Palestine and in search for his aunt Elizabeth Japhet, wife of the famous banker Jacob Japhet, who lived in the German colony, British soldiers arrested him as an illegally entered German spy. He was able to clear up the misunderstanding and joined the British Army in the fight against the Germans. He fought in Egypt, Greece and Crete until the Germans took over Crete in a devastating air raid on May 20, 1941. As a prisoner of war, he was transferred in a cattle wagon via Greece and Yugoslavia to Stalag 8b, a prison camp in Lamsdorf, Poland. For four years his everyday life in the camp included hard physical labor in the coal mine and railway construction, as well as hunger and the fear of still being murdered as a German Jew. In the prison camp he got to know his later friend, the prisoner David Dinur, a professor of economics and accounting, in an association that would later shape his professional life.

After the liberation in May 1945 he reached Palestine via London, where an aunt was living. As a volunteer he joined the Zionist paramilitary underground organization Haganah in Israel, was wounded in fighting and in a military camp meets his wife Dr. Ruth Lev Ari Loewenhertz (born 1924 in Königsberg). The two married on November 21, 1950 in Haifa. After the founding of the state of Israel, the Haganah was transferred to the Israeli defense forces and Paul Elchanan Schlessinger worked all his life to build up a strong and transparent economy in Israel. He played an important role in the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics and is one of the founders of the Israel Securities Authority (ISA).

The brothers Paul and Max have been in close contact throughout their lives. Today, the family of Paul Elchanan and Ruth Lev Ari Schlessinger lives in Israel.

Text: Alexandra Elflein-Schwier

emigrant and prominent economic historian Henry Kaufman (\*1927) – also known as Dr. Doom in the USA since he accurately predicted the bursting of the credit bubble in 2007/8 – supervised his Master's thesis on "The Financing of the Italian South".

In 1948, Max Salton met the love of his life. Her name was Lottie Aronstein and she was a refugee herself, whom the National Socialists had driven from her homeland.



*Aronstein family ca. 1890 in front of the family home in Wünnenberg. In the first row from left to right: Henriette Aronstein (née Rapp), Levi Aronstein, Tilly Aronstein, Paul Aronstein (father of Lottie), Friedl Aronstein. Second row from left to right: Anna Aronstein, Eduard Aronstein (died in World War I), Hedwig Aronstein, Fritz Aronstein, Toni Aronstein, Hermann Aronstein. Photo: Private property Gertrud Tölle (formerly Lottie Salton)*

## The Aronstein Family

Lottie Aronstein had a completely different background from her husband Mark Salton. She didn't come from the educated middle classes of Germany's large urban centers, but rather from the countryside. For generations, her family had lived in Wünnenberg, which still exists today as a relatively small town near Paderborn, located in the triangle between Dortmund, Bielefeld, and Kassel.

We don't know at what point this town became home to a significant Jewish community. In any case, when it began, there was no urban ghetto as in Hanau or Mainz, but rather individual Jews who had purchased a "Geleitbrief" (writ of escort) for themselves and their family from the Prince-Bishop of Paderborn, in exchange for a respectable sum. This writ entitled them to settle, travel, and trade on the Prince-Bishop's territory. Many of these so-called "Geleitjuden" (Jews given temporary protection by the nobility) earned their living by trading livestock, and the same applied to Aronstein family.

## The Cattle and Meat Trade: A Key Branch of Business for Jewish Communities in the Countryside

Whereas historians have covered Jewish life in cities relatively well, there hasn't been as much detailed research into rural

communities. There are still many questions left unanswered. To gain an insight into Jewish life in Wünnenberg, we can draw on a fundamental work by Gertrud Tölle. She was friends with Lottie Salton, whose memories are incorporated into Ms. Tölle's text. But despite her excellent archiving work, we still don't know very much about the daily living conditions of the Aronstein family. That's why, in order to reconstruct the history of the family's everyday life, we have consulted – with the utmost care, of course – a work that focuses on the lives of Jewish cattle dealers in the Swiss region of Fricktal. Of course, we don't know whether everyday life in Westphalia would have been exactly like this, but we can assume that there are some basic similarities.

The focal point for a group of cattle dealers was always a booming cattle market, just like the one that existed in Wünnenberg when the Aronstein family settled there. As Lottie Salton told her friend Gertrud Tölle, the Aronstein family specialized in horse trading, and Lottie's father Paul (1896-1968) was a renowned horse dealer, *well-known far beyond the village borders*.

We know that Lottie Salton's great-grandparents, Ahron Artur Aronstein (1809-1863) and his wife Bertha, née Rapp (1814-1898), along with their five children, were among the 51 Jewish residents, or 10 Jewish families, living in Wünnenberg in 1859. The total number of people living in Wünnenberg that year is unknown. However, we do have figures for 1849 – 1,379 residents –



Grave stone of Levi Aronstein,  
grandfather of Lottie Salton,  
on the Jewish cemetery in Wünnenberg.  
Photo: Alexandra Elflein-Schwier.



Grave stone of Henrietta Aronstein, née Rapp,  
grandmother of Lottie Salton,  
on the Jewish cemetery of Wünnenberg.  
Photo: Alexandra Elflein-Schwier.

and for 1867 – 1,246 residents. Levi (1847-1922) and Felix (1852-1904), the two sons of Ahron and Bertha Aronstein, would therefore have grown up in a small, manageable town. Ahron Aronstein certainly wasn't the only head of a Jewish household who earned his family's livelihood by trading livestock. Many Jewish people worked in this line of business, perhaps also because it combined trade with credit. Whereas farmers expected to receive cash in exchange for the goods they sold, they would generally buy their oxen or horses on credit. After all, a purchase like this was a major investment, the cost of which would have to be spread across a longer period of time. And if a farmer was facing financial difficulties, he wouldn't turn to the bank, but rather to cattle dealers, who would buy a cow from him; this cow would not be taken away, but rather rented out to the same farmer in need of money, enabling him to continue running his business and possibly buy the cow back again. Alexandra Elflein-Schwier, who knew Lottie Salton well, remembers her saying that her father had been highly respected in Wünnenberg and known for never turning anyone away who was in financial difficulty. A good understanding of the market was essential for any cattle dealer. Those who went to see how local farmers managed and treated their cattle were able to make their decisions more sensibly. For that reason, business trips were an everyday matter for successful cattle dealers. Besides, many farmers were not willing to wait until the markets to sell, since these were only

held every six months and in the city, which was often located far away. This meant that cattle dealers often had to travel in the wind and rain, with a large sum of money and a small herd in tow. We must therefore assume that Lottie Salton's ancestors were *tough men* – as Diemuth Königs describes them in her book about the Jewish cattle dealers of the Fricktal – who were not unlike the cowboys of America. Alexandra Elflein-Schwier says that it was important for Lottie Salton to remember her father as the commanding figure that he was before his abduction to Buchenwald concentration camp in the November pogroms.

When it came to traveling, the numerous commandments of the Torah posed a particular problem. Those who couldn't make it home for the Sabbath would have to know non-Jewish farmers who were willing to look after their herd on the Sabbath. And to be sure of having a kosher meal to eat, traveling cattle dealers would take their own kosher food with them and would already have deposited their own cooking equipment at various inns and farms along their regular route.

Jewish cattle dealers who were particularly wealthy were spared this effort, because their poorer colleagues without any capital were only too happy to work for them as "schmuser" – a Jewish term for broker or intermediary. In any case, the financially powerful Jewish cattle dealers of the 19th century were considered important members of the rural community, who turned a local cattle market into a supra-regional event that brought in taxes and fees for the town coffers and plenty of business for the local taverns. The town officials of Wünnenberg were therefore happy to accommodate as many Jewish cattle dealers in their community as possible. However, Wünnenberg's cattle market seems to have dropped off at some point in the mid-19th century. It was *closed down due to unfavorable conjunctures*, as the members of the local council wrote to the "Königliche Landratsamt" (Royal District Office). But in 1880, the market was revived and, from 1889 onward, the big cattle market was held twice a year – on April 15 and October 17. The nine Aronstein children, among them Lottie's father Paul, would probably have attended it with great enthusiasm. There were attractions for the villagers, such as a tombola, sack races, and a climbing pole, as well as horse racing and a fair with prizes for the best animals, not forgetting the concert and the fireworks. These cattle markets would have been attended by the entire village. Paul's parents may well have played a special role in the procession and the celebratory feast. After all, the Aronsteins were part of the Wünnenberg elite – Simon Aronstein (1840-1908), uncle to Paul's father, had served as a member of the local council since 1887.



*Levi and Henriette Aronstein, née Rapp. Grandparents of Lottie Salton, on her father's side. Photo: Private property Gertrud Tölle (formerly Lottie Salton)*



*Lottie's parents in later years. Photo: Private property Gertrud Tölle (formerly Lottie Salton)*



*Paul and Adele Aronstein, née Pollack, Lottie Salton's parents. Photo: Private property Gertrud Tölle (formerly Lottie Salton)*

## A Small Jewish Community

What might Jewish life in Wünnenberg have been like? Gertrud Tölle has gathered a wealth of information on this subject. There had been a synagogue in Wünnenberg since the 1830s, whose board included Levi Aronstein, Lottie's grandfather. It was located in a small half-timbered annex, which the Jewish cattle dealer and butcher Hertz Eichenwald had built as an extension to his home. There was also the Jewish cemetery, established no later than 1820, which has been listed as a protected monument since 1987. On the initiative of Lehmann Aronstein, a protective fence was erected around this cemetery in 1901 to prevent the village cows from grazing between the gravestones.

From 1859 at the latest, the Jewish community ran a small school, attended by Lottie's grandfather Levi. At this school, he learned how to read and write, as well as arithmetic, Hebrew, German, and French. The upper school classes were not only taught music, history, science, and drawing; they also received an extensive education on the Pentateuch and the Jewish religion.

Levi's eldest son Paul, who was born on August 14, 1896, did not attend this school. It had been closed down on March 1, 1896, because there were too few Jewish children living in the village and, by that point, it was possible for them to attend a state school. This decision demonstrates how greatly the Jewish population of Wünnenberg had declined. Shortly after 1900, there were so few Jews living there that it was no longer possible to assemble the ten men required for Jewish worship.

Perhaps this decline is evidence of a social development that threatened the livelihood of many Jewish butchers from the latter third of the 19th century: the emerging concept of animal welfare.

In 1837, the first German animal protection organization was established in Stuttgart; by 1892, there were already 191 such organizations, with a rough total of 70,000 members. They not only demanded a ban on vivisection, but also a law against ritual slaughter, the slaughter of animals without stunning, as required by Jewish law. The campaign against ritual animal slaughter became an issue that the intellectual elite could use as a moral facade for its antisemitism. In 1871, when the new "Reichsstrafgesetzbuch" (Imperial Penal Code) did not punish animal abuse, including vivisection and slaughter, as a criminal offense, animal rights activists across Europe protested it, including numerous vegetarians, who vehemently opposed the killing of animals, particularly through ritual slaughter.



*Class photo from 1935. Lottie is the dark-haired girl in the second row from the bottom, fourth from the right. Photo: Private property Willi Bonefeld, Bad Wünnenberg.*

In 1893, due to public pressure, an absolute ban on ritual slaughter was imposed in Switzerland. In January 1930, Bavaria became the first federated state in the German Empire where slaughter without stunning was punishable by up to six months in prison. As early as April 21, 1933, the Nazis took advantage of the widespread support for animal welfare issues to pass their "Gesetz über das Schlachten von Tieren" (Law on the Slaughter of Animals), which entered into force nine days later and strictly prohibited ritual slaughter without stunning.

And so, from the 1870s, the debate over animal slaughter, combined with competition from industrial slaughterhouses, pushed small and medium-sized Jewish-owned butcher's stores out of the market. The affected business owners had to seek out another profession, which was easier to do in the cities than in the remote, economically underdeveloped town of Wünnenberg. The Aronstein family was not impacted by these developments, since their trade revolved around horses, which were only used as a source of meat in exceptional circumstances. By 1938, they were the last Jewish family in Wünnenberg.

### **A Well-Integrated Family in the Countryside and the November Pogroms**

Despite all of this, Lottie and Erich would not have been short of playmates, because the Aronsteins, living at Unterstadt 114 (now Mittelstraße 12), were part of the village community. There was an Aronstein sitting on the local council every year from 1887 to 1905. Of course, all of Levi Aronstein's four sons went to fight in the First World War. In a letter written by Lottie Salton to school pupils in Wünnenberg on May 27, 1994, she summarizes



*Lottie Aronstein as a child ca. 1930.*

*Photo: Private property Gertrud Tölle (formerly Lottie Salton)*

their respective fates as follows: *Paul Aronstein and his three brothers, Fritz, Hermann, and Eduard, fought for the fatherland in the First World War; Eduard gave his life on the battlefield, Hermann was shot in the stomach, leaving him severely disabled for the rest of his life, Fritz was shot in the lungs, and my father was shot in the head. Lottie's father was even awarded the Iron Cross, though this was of little use to him during the November pogroms of 1938.*



*Lottie and her brother Erich in a studio photograph before they fled their home.*

*Photo: ANS/Hill, ANS 2021/3, p. 50, fig. 10.*

*Photo: Private property Gertrud Tölle (formerly Lottie Salton)*

But first, let's talk a bit about the events leading up to what is known as "Kristallnacht": on April 26, 1938, the "Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden" (Ordinance on the Registration of Jewish Property) entered into force, which forced all Jewish citizens to register any assets or property whose value exceeded 5,000 reichsmarks. At that point, it seems that many Nazi politicians were still planning to force German citizens of the Jewish faith to leave the country by confiscating their assets. Following the Évian Conference of July 15, 1938, it was clear that none of the 32 participating countries was able or, above all, willing to increase their quotas for Jewish refugees. In October 1938, the Polish government made things worse by invalidating the passports of any Polish citizens who had lived abroad for longer than five years. This made them stateless, which implied that the German government could no longer deport any of the approx. 18,000 Polish Jews who were said to be living illegally in the German Empire at the time. Germany issued an ultimatum to Poland to withdraw the decree; Poland refused, at which point the Gestapo began to arrest the people in question and take them across the border. 7,000 people waited for days under inhumane conditions, without any food or humanitarian aid, in no man's land, while both Germany and Poland denied them entry at gunpoint.

Among those affected was the family of Herschel Grynszpan. It was November 3 when the 17-year-old, who was living in Paris, heard about what was going on. Perhaps Grynszpan thought he could rile up the public by assassinating a diplomat at the German Embassy. But this just gave the Nazi rulers a reason to test the mood among the German population: were the German people ready to defend their neighbors against thugs? Even before the diplomat had died, an order was issued to the German press to use evocative language to describe the assassination and to highlight, in particular, the notion *that the assassination must have very severe consequences for Jews in Germany*.

Thus began perhaps the most shameful days of German history. While earlier generations of historians used to trivialize the Kristallnacht event, writing about it as though just a few shop windows had been broken, modern historians rightly refer to it as the November Pogroms.

On November 10, 1938, the Gestapo picked up Paul Aronstein, Lottie's father, to deport him to *Buchenwald concentration camp in a sealed cattle truck*. He left behind a defenseless family, who were at the mercy of the troupe of thugs organized by the Wünnenberg civil servant Schnepfer, *led by the butcher Temme* from the neighboring village of *Fürstenberg*, as Lottie still remembered in her old age.

Gertrud Tölle relays Lottie Salton's memories as follows: *On November 11, his wife Adele Aronstein was alone with the two children, Erich (10) and Lottie (14), and her sister-in-law Anne, the unmarried sister of her husband Paul, when the attackers came and smashed the glass in the doors and windows, destroyed the furniture and all the china; even the feather beds were torn open and the feathers dumped out of the smashed windows. None of the neighbors helped them; they hid in the stable and waited in mortal fear that they would lose their lives, too. The next day, Ms. Aronstein went with her children to Rütten, to her elderly mother (née Pollack). It was not until two months later that the children were sent, unaccompanied, on their journey, which took them first to their mother Adele's sister in Cologne, and then, together with other children, to Belgium, where there were families willing to take them in. In Erich and Lottie's case, this was the family of Paul Aronstein's niece, the daughter of his brother.*

Our writer Gertrud Tölle knows from family members how the other villagers, who had lived next door to the Aronsteins for generations, responded to this attack. Her aunt Maria Loer experienced the attack herself as a small child: *Maria, who was 10 years old at the time – and already in bed due to the late hour of the attack on the Aronsteins – remembers hearing the sound of shattering windows and the chants of rage, which carried all the way up to her bedroom. She knows about the night's events from stories and conversations in her parents' house. Specifically, she remembers that her parents provided shelter to the Aronsteins' servant after the family escaped. Meinolf Schulte from Haaren, known as "Uncle Meinolf", lived with the Hüstens for a long time. He slept in the former carpentry workshop; he was afraid that, as a "Judenhelper" (Jew helper), he too would come into the NSDAP's*



*French internment camp at the foot of the Pyrenees.*

*Map: Kryobob/Wikimedia/cc-by 4.0*

*line of fire. However, since he felt responsible for “his masters” property, he went to the abandoned house after dark every night to check that everything was in order, until it was finally sold and the valuables and furniture were flogged off. Ms. Loer also remembers the Aronsteins’ well-furnished home and the frightening image of the shattered glass chandelier in the first small anteroom behind the front door.*

### Fleeing Halfway Around the World

Like many other Jews, Paul Aronstein experienced extreme violence in Buchenwald. Lottie reports that he returned to his family *a mentally and physically broken man*. But still, he was alive. And in the fall of 1939, when he was to be deported again – probably for good, this time – one of his comrades from the

First World War tipped him off in time. Paul Aronstein fled to Belgium, where he found his children in the internment camp of Marneffe near Lüttich.

When Belgium, too, was occupied by German troops on May 17, Paul Aronstein fled again with 15-year-old Lottie and 11-year-old Erich. Many German Jewish refugees fled via the same route: their aim was to cross the Pyrenees mountains in order to pass through northern Spain, under Franco’s rule at the time, to Portugal; once there, they would have at least a small chance of finding a ship that would get them out of Europe.

The three of them set off on their perilous journey. Once again, the children were separated from their father. They struggled on without him to the foot of the Pyrenees, where they were captured and imprisoned in Camp de Gurs, an internment camp located 75 km from the Spanish border. This was the largest camp under the Vichy regime at the time. But that didn’t mean that the living conditions experienced by its detainees were any better than in Germany. The prisoners slept on the bare floor, on a sack filled with straw. The ground was muddy when it rained, the weather was icy at the foot of the Pyrenees, and in addition to hunger, detainees also had to endure disastrous sanitary conditions, as well as numerous diseases, especially dysentery. An average of seven people died in Gurs each day. Lottie and Erich escaped from this hellhole, only to be captured again and handed over to the next internment camp – Saint-Cyprien. What a scene it must have been when the two children found their father there! Perhaps this reunion moved even the most jaded officials, because somehow the three of them received assistance from the Red Cross, enabling them to leave France together. They reached Morocco, where they spent



*Detainees between the barracks of Camp de Gurs in southern France, 1939.*

another four months in the Kasba Tadla concentration camp before finally leaving for the USA. *On August 14, 1941, after an odyssey lasting two years and eight months, we set foot on American soil for the first time, reports Lottie Salton.*

They even got something resembling a happy ending, if we can even use such a phrase in connection with such terrible circumstances: Adele Aronstein and her mother also managed to leave the country, and the family was reunited in New York.

### Lottie and Mark Salton Build a New Life Together

Getting to New York was one thing. Building a new life there was another. Lottie Aronstein, now 17 years old, managed to find an apprenticeship as a diamond cutter. Even before the Second World War, New York, alongside Antwerp, was the most important trading center for diamonds in the world. Due to the war, Antwerp had drastically declined in significance, and the business had now become concentrated in New York's Diamond District on 47th street. The predominantly Jewish diamond traders – to this day, many business deals are said to be closed with the traditional Yiddish blessing and a handshake – were desperately seeking skilled workers. This was a major opportunity for a hard-working young woman like Lottie Aronstein, who spoke hardly any English when she first arrived in New York – we mustn't forget that she was unable to complete a regular school education, something she regretted all her life.

She picked up English in no time. Perhaps speaking German brought back too many terrible memories. And sometime after Mark Salton's arrival in New York in July 1946, the pair of them met and fell in love. They married just three months later in 1948, as though trying to catch up on all the human happiness the Nazis had taken away from them, as quickly as they could.

### Restitution in an Indifferent World

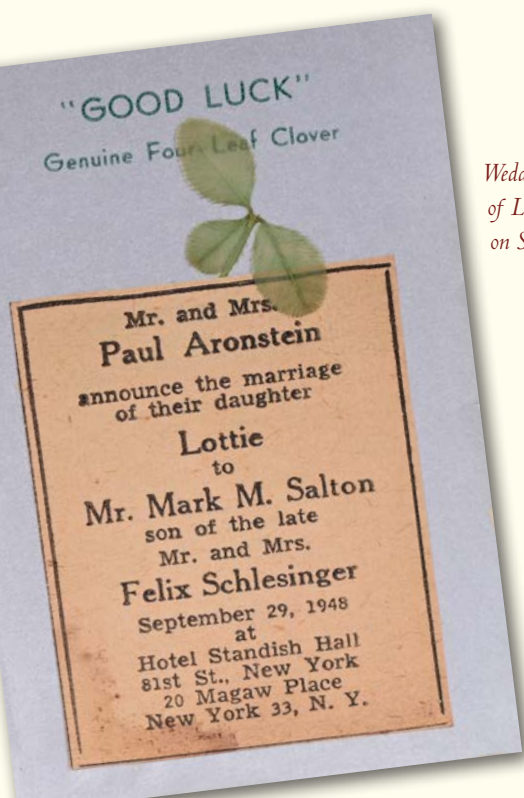
We will probably never know for sure why Mark Salton regularly published fixed price lists as a coin dealer while earning his money in a different job and having more than enough to do as it was. Was it important to him to resume the family tradition? In any case, he issued his lists under the name *Mark M. Salton-Schlessinger (Formerly Berlin-Amsterdam), Numismatists since 1898.*

We know that Mark Salton became an active member of the American Numismatic Society shortly after his immigration. And he told Fritz Rudolf Künker how he used to pay visits to the American coin dealers in New York back then to buy European coins of them. He would offer them in his fixed price lists but he was never angry if they went unsold. During this time, Mark Salton became more of a collector than a dealer. He tells us that, on his trips to Europe in the early 1950s, he used to visit European coin dealers. And a humorous anecdote explains why there are hardly any invoices for the coins he bought in those years: *In order to make the accounts for our purchases, Mr. Spero dived into the waste basket to retrieve a suitable piece of writing paper.* The rest of the story is too good not to tell it: *It happened to be a past opera program (Wagner's Walküre), which caused Mr. Spero to regale us about his enthusiasm for Wagner. I was careless enough to allow that we too loved opera music, and that amongst our favorite composers were Donizetti, Mozart, Rossini and Verdi. This aberration of taste was quickly disposed of by Mr. Spero with a terse "rubbish". I had it on my tongue to quote Mark Twain who said about Wagner's music "it really isn't as bad as it sounds"; but to spare Mr. Spero's blood pressure I suppressed the remark.*

While Mark Salton built his coin collection buying from coin dealers, he also tried to reclaim his father's possessions from the government. He had help from his Dutch colleague Jacques Schulman, who had taken over the company of his uncle Maurits, who had been murdered in Sobibor in 1943. It was through Mr. Schulman that Mark Salton learned that a man named Moes was trying to sell books that had clearly come from his father's library. Moes claimed that he had bought them legally from a Jewish seller in 1944. Since Moes had already attracted attention to himself, the Dutch customs authority refused to grant him the export license he requested, so he went looking for a buyer in the Netherlands. Knowing how difficult it would be to recover items stolen by the Nazis via administrative channels, Schulman advised Mark Salton to buy the books from the man. Is that what Mark Salton did? We don't know. In any case, he managed to recover these books in 1950.

Mark and Lottie Salton remained alert. As coin dealers, they had access to all their colleagues' auction catalogs and fixed price lists, so they kept coming across small series of books and coins that had belonged to Mark's father. One particularly frustrating episode was when they had to negotiate with the German authorities over an 18th-century book on the medals of Johann Carl Hedlinger. Mark Salton was certain that it had come from his father's library! He not only recognized the hand-written

*Wedding announcement  
of Lottie and Mark Salton  
on September 29, 1948.*



numbering of the plates, but also some water stains. After all, this was the book with which his father had introduced him to the art of medal making. According to the authorities, this was not sufficient evidence. They pointed out many alternative ways in which the current holder of the book could have become its rightful owner. We can see how greatly Mark Salton was affected by this formalistic process from a letter that he wrote on March 25, 1976, to his attorney Volker Hucklenbroich and which is kept at the ANS: *The nature of these grounds for the judgment is not that of jurisprudence but of an attempt to portray the Nazi governmental agencies as technically well-functioning branch offices whose credibility is to be preferred over the logical proof brought forth by us. ... It negates the Restitution Laws when the court demands 150% proof from us, we who feared for our lives at the time, and in cases where the facts are clear.*

Although there were often small triumphs – for instance, Mark Salton, together with his brother Paul, received CHF 25,680 from the settlement reached with Swiss banks in 2002 over the unnamed assets – the hunt for his father Felix's possessions was probably an arduous and frustrating ordeal that would have shocked and upset the couple over and over again.

### Experts on and Collectors of Renaissance and Baroque Medals

Here, Mark Salton tells us himself why he and his wife Lottie focused on collecting medals and plaquettes from the Renaissance and Baroque periods: *Medals in those days were the step-children of dealers and collectors alike, their golden age had faded with the dispersal of the illustrious collections of Felix, Loebbecke, Lanna, Vogel etc. Not until several decades had passed were they "rediscovered", and now once again medals are widely cherished as much for their aesthetic qualities as for the humanistic message they convey.*

By 1965, their collection and knowledge were already very extensive, as evidenced by a catalog for an exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art in Brunswick, Maine, where 186 items from their collection were presented under the title *The Salton Collection: Renaissance & Baroque Medals and Plaquettes*. Lottie Salton had written the catalog's impressive introduction.

*Fixed price lists of coin dealer  
Mark M. Salton-Schlessinger.  
Photo: ANS/Hill, ANS 2021/3,  
p. 45, fig. 3.*





Lottie and Mark Salton in Switzerland. Photo: Ira Rezak.



Paul and Adele Aronstein, parents to Lottie Salton, returned to their old homeland only once in the late 1950s, to set up a grave stone on the Jewish cemetery in Wünnenberg for all those family members whom they had lost in the Holocaust. The inscription reads: In memory of Karl Kahn – Hedwig Kahn, née Aronstein, Hermann Aronstein, Ida Aronstein, née Rapp, and their children Hilde, Liesel and Fritz, Tilly Meyer, née Aronstein, Anna Aronstein, Erna Schwerin-Gottschalk, née Aronstein, Rosel Aronstein, née Lessing. They died for their faith. Photo: Alexandra Elflein-Schwier.

## Happy Years in Italy

In 1966, Mark Salton was given the opportunity he may have dreamed of: he was appointed head of the Italian branch of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company. He and his wife Lottie went to Rome. This city must have been a dream destination for any American couple back then. They'd all seen "Roman Holiday". The Italy of the late 1960s, with its not-yet-overcrowded museums and excavation sites, Cinecittà studios, intoxicating music, and the international community in its capital Rome, was a bustling hub of joie de vivre. At the ages of 52 and 42 respectively, Mark and Lottie Salton were young enough to enjoy everything that Italy and Europe had to offer them. They traveled, enjoyed their lives, and reconnected with some of Mark's father's old business friends.

## A Life Dedicated to Numismatics

In 1975, the Saltons returned to New York. In 1981, Mark Salton retired, which gave him all the more time to focus on numismatic pursuits with Lottie. He became a great supporter of the American Numismatic Society, to which Lottie Salton entrusted all of her husband's numismatic papers following his death. Among this impressive bundle of papers, many untold stories still await their discovery. These will probably paint a more vivid picture of the Schlessingers' story than we've provided here.

Mark Salton, formerly Max Schlessinger, died after a fulfilled life on December 31, 2005, at the age of 92. He was followed in death by his beloved wife Lottie Salton, née Aronstein, on April 18, 2020.

The couple leaves us with a moving testament to the fact that, despite even the most terrible experiences, it is possible to start over and look ahead. They decided to donate the proceeds from their collection to organizations that commit themselves to the remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust in order to ensure that hopefully their fate is never repeated.

The proceeds will benefit the following organizations:

- the Anti-Defamation League, an American organization based in New York City, which stands against the discrimination and defamation of Jewish people;
- the American Society for Yad Vashem, which advances the mission of Israel's Yad Vashem memorial, i.e. to preserve the memory of the Holocaust for future generations, by documenting its events, conducting academic research on it, and passing on knowledge of it to descendants;
- and the Leo Baeck Institute, a New York-based organization that works to document the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry in particular.



*Mark Salton at his desk after his retirement. Photo: Ira Rezak.*



*Lottie and Mark Salton in 2001. Photo: Ira Rezak.*

## Post Scriptum

It is a great honor for Künker that Lottie and Mark Salton have stipulated in their will that their great numismatic collection be auctioned jointly by the American auction house Stack's Bowers Galleries and by Künker in America and Germany respectively. We pay tribute to the life's work of our friends, who had lost everything, and we are humbly grateful for the trust they have placed in us. May the auction of Lottie and Mark Salton's collection represent another step toward reconciliation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Fritz Rudolf Künker".

Fritz Rudolf Künker

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dr. Andreas Kaiser".

Dr. Andreas Kaiser

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ulrich Künker".

Ulrich Künker

# Die Münzhändlerdynastie Hamburger und Schlessinger

## Leopold Hamburger

Frankfurt am Main

1861	Leopold Hamburger (1836-1902) gründet in Wien einen Mineralien-und Münzhandel
1864	Umzug nach Frankfurt am Main
1863-1866	Mitarbeit von Bruder Adolph Hamburger
1868	Cousin Leo Hamburger (1846-1929) tritt in die Firma ein
1875	Leo Hamburger wird Teilhaber

## L. & L. Hamburger

Frankfurt am Main, Uhlandstraße 56

1875-1902	Leopold Hamburger und Leo Hamburger leiten die Firma gemeinsam 37 Auktionen von 1889-1903
1904/1905	Aufspaltung der Firma L.& L. Hamburger

## Joseph Hamburger

Frankfurt am Main, Uhlandstraße 56

1905-1929	Joseph Hamburger (1874-1929), der Sohn von Leopold Hamburger führt die Firma in der Uhlandstrasse weiter 15 Auktionen von 1905-1915
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## Versteigerung der Bibliothek von Joseph Hamburger

am 15.04.1929 durch A.E. Cahn, Frankfurt

## Leo Hamburger

Frankfurt am Main, Scheffelstrasse 54

1904	Neffe Felix Schlessinger wird Mitarbeiter
1912	Teilhaber werden: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Nussbaum (1871-1941) Schwiegersohn von Leo Hamburger</li> <li>• Moses Schnerb (1873-1937)</li> <li>• Felix Schlessinger (1879-1944)</li> </ul>
1928	Felix Schlessinger scheidet aus
1929	nach dem Tod von Leo Hamburger führt David Nussbaum die Firma weiter
1936	Abwicklung der Firma unter dem Druck der antijüdischen NS-Politik Auktionen von 1905-1934

### Felix Schlessinger

Berlin-Charlottenburg, Bismarckstraße 97/98

12 Auktionen von 1928-1936

1936 Umzug nach Amsterdam,  
Prinsengracht 701

1936-1941 Fortführung der Firma in Amsterdam  
2 Auktionen, Lagerlisten

25.10.1944 Ermordung von Felix und  
Hedwig Schlessinger in Auschwitz

### Max Schlessinger

ab 1946 Mark M. Salton

1914 12. Januar. Geburt als ältester Sohn  
von Felix Schlessinger (1879-1944)  
und Hedwig, geb. Feuchtwanger  
(1891-1944)

1918 11. Januar. Geburt des Bruders  
Paul Elchanan Schlessinger

1928 Umzug der Familie Schlessinger  
nach Berlin

Schüler des Werner-Siemens-  
Realgymnasiums

1936 Umzug der Familie Schlessinger  
nach Amsterdam

1936 Max Schlessinger gibt in Amsterdam  
seine erste Lagerliste heraus

1942 Flucht aus den Niederlanden über  
Belgien, Frankreich nach Spanien

1943 Gefangener im Campo de  
Concentración de Miranda de Ebro

1943-1946 Mitarbeiter der niederländischen  
Botschaft in Lissabon

1946-2005 New York. Max Schlessinger  
nimmt den Namen Mark Salton an

1948 29. September:  
Vermählung mit Lottie Aronstein

1946-1981 Mitarbeiter, später Direktor der Bank  
Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company

1957/1958 Mark M. Salton-Schlessinger gibt seine  
fixed price list no 25 heraus

1966-1975 Das Ehepaar Salton in Rom  
Mark Salton wurde Leiter der  
italienischen Filiale seiner Bank

1981 Pensionierung

2005 31. Dezember. Tod von Mark Salton

2020 18. April. Tod von Lottie Salton

# Wichtige Ereignisse in der Übersicht

## Frankfurt/Mainz

- 18.02.1879 Felix Yoel Schlessinger wird in Mainz geboren.
- 22.09.1891 Hedwig (Hindel) Feuchtwanger wird in München geboren.
- 1911 Felix Schlessinger und Hedwig Feuchtwanger heiraten.
- 1912 Leo Hamburger überträgt die Teilhaberschaft an seiner Firma an seinen Neffen Felix Schlessinger, seinen Schwiegersohn David Nussbaum (\*1871, gestorben 1941) und Moses Schnerb (\*1863, gestorben 1937).
- 12.01.1914 Max M. Schlessinger (Mark Salton) wird in Frankfurt geboren.
- 11.01.1918 Paul E. Schlessinger wird in Frankfurt geboren.
- 17.11.1924 Lottie Aronstein wird in Lippstadt geboren.

## Berlin

- 11.04.1928 Felix Schlessinger überlebt seine aktive Dienstzeit als Soldat im Ersten Weltkrieg, nimmt seine vorherige Tätigkeit zunächst in Frankfurt wieder auf und eröffnet 1928 seine Münzhandlung in Berlin Charlottenburg, Bismarckstr. 97/98. Hier werden die Auktionen 2-13 der Münzhandlung Felix Schlessinger durchgeführt.
- 22.10.1928 Auktion 1, Braunschweigische Münzen und Medaillen zusammen mit Henry Seligmann in Hannover.
- Februar 1929 Leo Hamburger verstirbt, da er seinen einzigen Sohn und Schwiegersohn überlebt hat, übernehmen David Nussbaum und Felix Schlessinger die Firma Leo Hamburger.
- 24.06.1929 Auktion 2, Sammlung von Talern und Goldmünzen.
- 11.11.1929 Auktion 3, Sammlung aus norddeutschem Besitz (Edmund Nordheim).
- 31.03.1930 Auktion 4, Sammlung aus norddeutschem Besitz Teil II (Edmund Nordheim).
- 26.05.1930 Auktion 5, Sammlung Schweizer Münzen und Medaillen.
- 15.09.1930 Auktion 6, Sammlung des Herrn M. Frankiewicz in Posen in Kooperation mit der Firma Leo Hamburger, Frankfurt.
- 20.10.1930 Auktion 7, Sammlung aus norddeutschem Besitz Teil III.
- 16.03.1931 Auktion 8, Sammlung Kirsten: Hamburgische Münzen und Medaillen.
- 07.12.1931 Auktion 9, Münzen und Medaillen von Mecklenburg, Rostock/Wismar.
- 02.05.1933 Auktion 10, Sammlung aus ausländischem Museumsbesitz (Ermitage, Leningrad).
- 26.02.1934 Auktion 11, Sammlung aus ausländischem Museumsbesitz Teil II (Ermitage, Leningrad).
- 27.-28.2.1934 Auktion 12, Sammlung aus ausländischem Museumsbesitz Teil III (Ermitage, Leningrad).
- 04.02.1935 Auktion 13, Sammlung Griechischer Münzen aus Museumsbesitz (Ermitage, Leningrad), 1655 Nummern.
- 1936 Aufgrund der repressiven antijüdischen Verhältnisse in Berlin emigriert die Familie Felix Schlessinger von Berlin nach Amsterdam. Die neue Münzhandlung Felix Schlessinger eröffnet in der Prinsengracht 701.

## Amsterdam

- 1936 Max Schlessinger tritt erstmals als selbständiger Numismatiker in Erscheinung. Er offeriert numismatische Literatur in seiner Lagerliste 1 unter der Firmenadresse Leidsche Kade 83 zu Amsterdam.
- 27.10.1937 Felix Schlessinger Amsterdam, Auktion 14, Sammlung Sune Eberhard Crona, Göteborg: Schweden.
- 11.11.1938 Die Nationalsozialisten überfallen die Familie Aronstein in Bad Wünnenberg, Lotties Vater Paul Aronstein wird in Schutzhaft genommen und in das KZ Buchenwald verschleppt, Lottie flieht mit ihrer Mutter Adele und ihrem Bruder Erich.

31.01.-1.2.1939	Felix Schlessinger Amsterdam, Auktion 15, Collection Baron Albert de la Chapelle.
10.05.1940	Einfall der deutschen Nationalsozialisten in die Niederlande. Hedwig Schlessinger erleidet einen Herzinfarkt und Felix Schlessinger wird im Folgenden gezwungen der Niederländischen Zentralbank alles Gold und sein Inventar von 635 Münzen anzubieten: darunter der Rosennoble von Kampen. Max ist aktiv im niederländischen Widerstand, Paul Schlessinger flieht per Schiff nach Palästina.
1941	Lottie und ihr Bruder können mit Hilfe des Roten Kreuzes nach 2 Jahren und 8 Monaten Flucht und Verfolgung mit ihrem Vater Paul nach New York fliehen, sie betreten am 14. August 1941 amerikanischen Boden. Drei Wochen zuvor erreicht ihre Mutter Adele, die in Bremen im Untergrund versteckt lebte, ebenfalls New York und die Familie findet in einem fremden Land mit fremder Sprache und Sitten wieder zusammen. Der Neuanfang ist schwer.
27.09.1942	Nach 4 Monaten in einem geheimen Versteck auf dem Dachboden von Alexander Wellensiek in Amsterdam tritt Mark Salton die Flucht durch Europa zusammen mit einem Freund und dessen Verlobter an.
04.03.1943	Deportation der Eheleute Hedwig und Felix Schlessinger in das Lager Westerbork.
21.04.1943	Deportation der Eheleute Hedwig und Felix Schlessinger in das Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt.
23.07.1943	Sofie Feuchtwanger - Bodenheimer, Großmutter von Max Schlessinger wird im Alter von 75 Jahren in Sobibor ermordet.
01.07.1943	Max Schlessinger wird von der Niederländischen Regierung aus dem Gefangenenlager Miranda de Ebro in den Pyrenäen befreit und arbeitet für die niederländische Regierung deren Botschaft in Lissabon. Er schickt Essensrationen in das KZ Theresienstadt zu seinen Eltern.
28.07.1944	Max Schlessinger erhält das Military Cross of Merit der Königin Wilhelmina der Niederlande für seine Verdienste.
31.07.1944	Die Omnia Treuhandgesellschaft bekommt den Auftrag die Firma Felix Schlessinger zu liquidieren (insgesamt wurden 13.000 jüdische Firmen von der Omnia in den Niederlanden liquidiert).
23.10.1944	Deportation der Eheleute Hedwig und Felix Schlessinger in das Konzentrationslager Auschwitz.
25.10.1944	Ermordung von Hedwig Schlessinger und Felix Schlessinger in Auschwitz.

## New York

1945-1946	Max Schlessinger wird von Verwandten ermutigt zu ihnen in die USA zu kommen. Die Chancen stehen gut, da die Zahl deutscher Einwanderer in den vorherigen fünf Kriegsjahren unter der offiziellen Quote lag und es somit keine Warteliste gab.
1946	Max Schlessinger beginnt seine Karriere als Analyst in der internationalen Abteilung der Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, damals eine der größten Banken von New York.
26.09.1948	Heirat von Lottie Aronstein und Max M. Schlessinger, jetzt Mark Salton, in New York.
1949	Die Saltons beginnen die ANS zu unterstützen.
1965	Mark und Lottie Salton stellen ihre Renaissance Medaillen im Bowdoin College aus.

## Rom

1966-1975	Das Ehepaar Salton lebt in Rom und genießt Italien, Mark Salton leitet das Büro der Manufacturers Hanover.
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## New York

31.12.2005	Mark Salton verstirbt mit fast 92 Jahren in New York.
18.04.2020	Lottie Salton verstirbt mit 96 Jahren in New York.
16.01.2022	Der erste Teil der Mark und Lottie Salton Collection wird sehr erfolgreich in New York versteigert, es folgen weitere Auktionen bis Januar 2023 der Auktionshäuser Stack's Bowers und Küner in insgesamt sechs Auktionen in den USA und in Deutschland.

# How the Salton Collection came to Osnabrück

by Ulrich Künker

On 10 July, 2020, an e-mail arrived from the USA. The sender, a very kind lady named Katharine W. Conroy from New York, introduced herself as the administrator of the estate of Mark and Lottie Salton. She delivered in her e-mail the sad news of Lottie Salton's death, three months earlier, on 18 April 2020.

The e-mail further informed us that Mark and Lottie Salton had chosen Stack's Bowers Galleries and the Künker auction houses to handle their collection. It was immediately clear to us that this had to be a significant collection. We had heard rumours about its importance, but it was not clear to us which areas were represented in the collection and where its main focus lay. The actual size of the collection was also completely unknown to us. As it turned out, it would indeed take some time before we would get an approximate idea of its gigantic size and content.

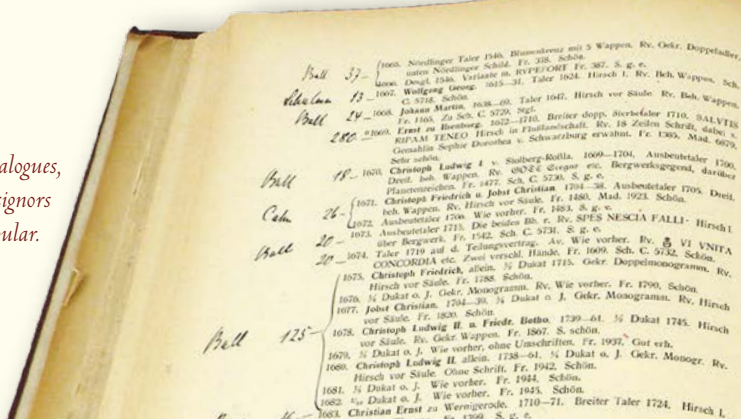
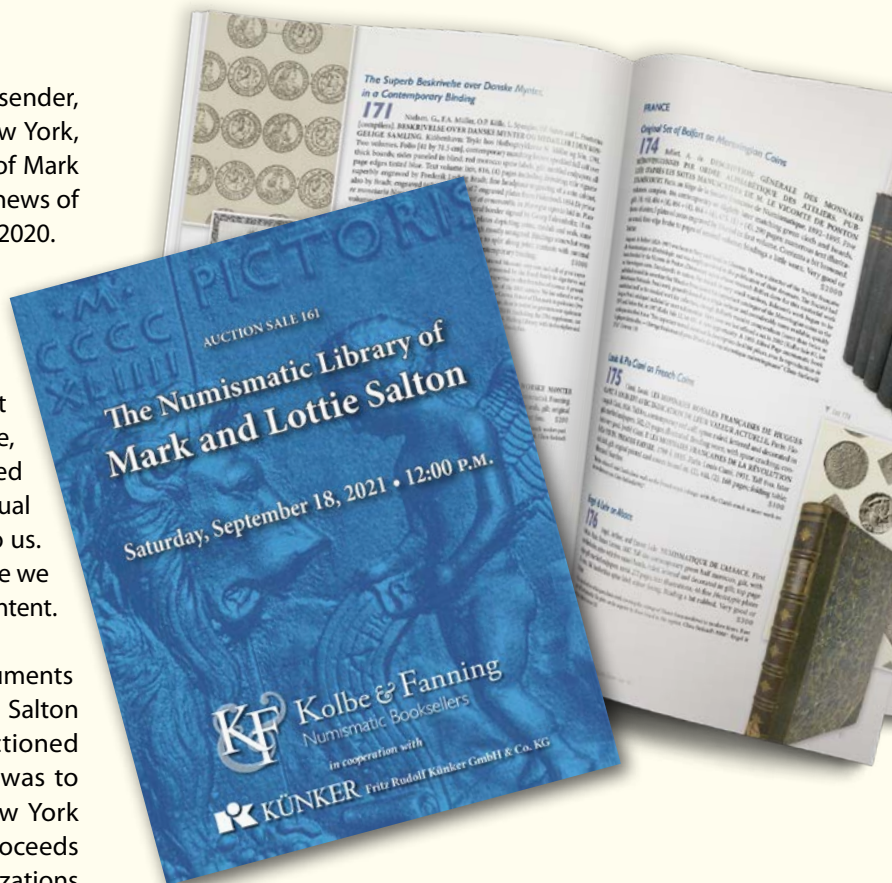
But some ideas of this was already clear from the documents that Ms Conroy had made available: Mark and Lottie Salton having decreed that their collection should be auctioned in an American-German alliance. The first auction was to have taken place within the programme of the New York International Numismatic Convention NYINC. The proceeds of the auctions would go to Jewish-American organizations (The Anti-Defamation League, the American Society for Yad Vashem and the Leo Baeck Institute). It further confirmed that this was to be large and significant collection, otherwise such an unusual decree would make little sense.

Shortly after receiving Ms Conroy's e-mail on 10 July, we contacted Larry Stack, who, as a close friend of the Saltons, residing in New York, was to conduct the negotiations on behalf of our American partners, while I was assigned this exciting honour on behalf of our side. Later, Brian Kendrella

Kolbe & Fanning Numismatic Bookseller auction catalogue:  
The Mark & Lottie Salton Numismatic Library -- Sale 161,  
18 September 2021.

and Alexandar Elfein-Schwier, as well as Fabian Halbich, joined the team to work on the Salton project. Having always enjoyed a very good relationship with both Larry Stack and Brian Kendrella, we were looking forward to working together on this exciting project.

The Schlössinger auction catalogues, which recorded the names of consignors and bidders, were especially popular.



Mark and Lottie Salton had also entrusted the Künker company with the auction of their numismatic library in cooperation with the well-known firm Kolbe & Fanning. For practical reasons, the auction was held in the USA, with the catalogue published by Kolbe & Fanning. This jointly-held auction was a complete success, Kolbe & Fanning having concentrated their advertising on this auction in the USA, while Künker covered Europe. It was particularly satisfying to see Mark and Lottie Saltons personal copies of the Hamburger and Schlessinger catalogs bringing record prices.

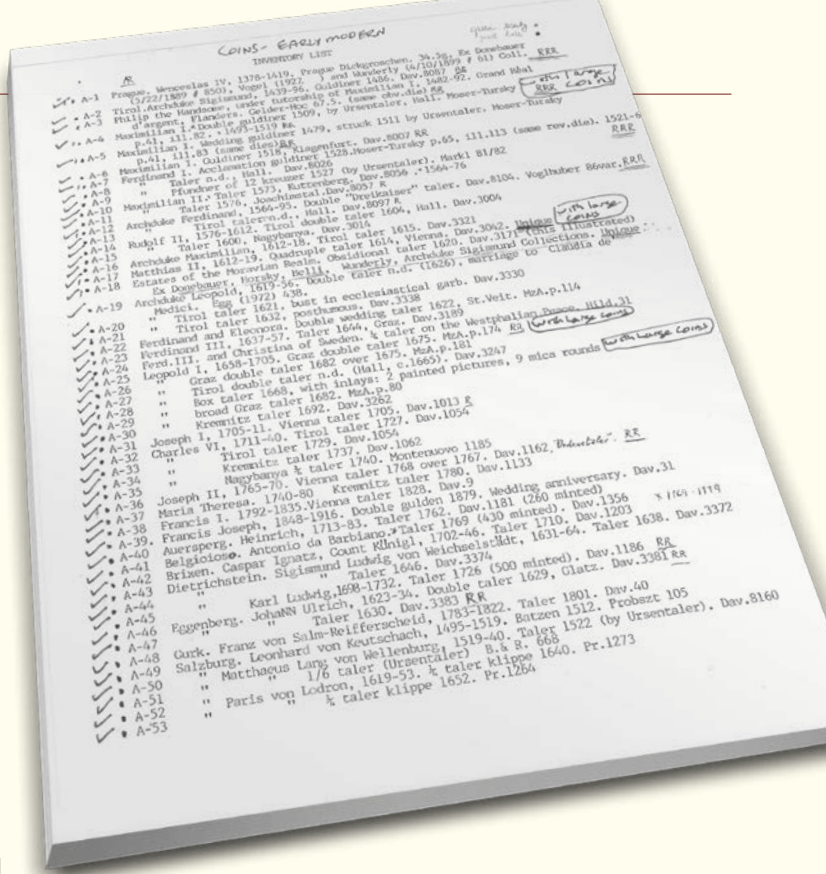
The executor of the estate, Ms Conroy, faced a major problem in that the collection was held in several locations with no central record of the items themselves. That is, even the trust charged with administering the estate did not have a clear picture of the contents and extent of the collection. The Covid restrictions in place in New York made the situation even more complicated. Europeans were barred from entering the USA without exception, so we at Künker had no chance to get a picture of the collection onsite.

What a lucky coincidence that we had two professional and trustworthy partners in New York, Larry Stack and Vicken Yegparian! Our pragmatic idea that our partners could simply meet with the estate manager Ms Conroy in the various bank branches, look into the safe deposit boxes, and get a first overview of the collection, failed due to the banks' Covid requirements: Besides the obligatory bank employee, only a maximum of one other visitor was

*Inventory list by Mark Salton for the collection.  
For modern coins ...*

allowed to be in the room when the safe deposit boxes were opened. Due to the pandemic situation in New York, this problem could not be resolved throughout 2020.

It was not until February 2021 that this changed. The coins could then finally be retrieved from the lockers and temporarily stored at the American Numismatic Society (ANS). There, the collection could be safely stored in the vaults and also checked against the directories that had since been located.



# Ancient Greek coins

- 2 -

- B-18 Campania.Nola. Didrachm c.360-325 BC. 7.23g. Sartiges 9 (this specimen)SNG.ANS. 551 (obv.die), 550 (same dies). Munich 283 (same obv.die). Ex Vicomte de Sartiges
- B-19 Campania. Neapolis. Didrachm, 325-241 BC. 7.22g. Symbol: small eagle on base line. Sartiges 7 (this specimen). SNG.ANS.401 (same rev.die). cp.SNG.Cop.455. Ex Vicomte de Sartiges
- B-20 Calabria. Tarentum. Stater, 510-500 BC, "Second Coinage". Phalantos riding dolphin. Rev. Hippocamp. Vlasto 129 (same dies). Cote 18 (same dies). Grose Pl.21.6 (same obv.die). 8.04g
- B-21 Tarentum. Stater c.460-443 BC. 7.96g. Ex Ars Classica X.36 and Lockett 110, SNG.Lockett 129. Vlasto 185 (same dies). SNG.ANS.850. Cote 67 . SNG.Cop.779
- B-22 Tarentum. Stater Period V (Alexander the Molossian, 334-330 BC). 7.96g. Vlasto 605 (same dies). Gulbenkian 35. Franke-Hinner 108.6.
- Tarentum. Stater Period VII (Pyrrhic Hegemony, 281-272 BC). Vlasto 713. SNG.ANS.1084. Evans VII.A-3. 6.60g
- Tarentum. Stater Period VII. Vlasto 727/731.Evans VII.A-6. SNG.ANS.1092/4. 6.61g
- Tarentum. Stater Period VII. Magistrate: Sodamos. Vlasto 778. Evans VII.D-1. SNG.ANS.1126
- Tarentum.Stater Period VII. Vlasto 741. Evans VII.C-3. SNG.ANS.1107. 6.49g
- Tarentum. Stater Period VII. Vlasto 795 (same dies).

*... and for ancient coins.*

Fortunately, Mark and Lottie Salton had also provided the executor of the estate with two well-known numismatists. Ira Rezak and Alan Stahl, both members of the Salton Trust board, who would soon get to work in the ANS offices matching the collection to the directory listings and checking the inventory. However, the pandemic threw a wrench in the works at this point once again: The elaborate project could not begin until the two numismatists had received full vaccination protection. This was not the case until June 2021.

Finally, at the end of August 2021 the work was completed and the collection could be moved from the ANS to the New York office of our partner Stack's Bowers Galleries. Once there, Vicken Yegparian and his staff had the challenging task of once again reviewing the collection for completeness using the inventories provided. Vicken and his team accomplished this task with great efficiency, thanks to the very good preparatory work of Ira Rezak and Alan Stahl; after only one week, a double-checked index of all coins and medals existed for the first time!

In Osnabrück, more than a year after we had received the news about the auction of the collection, we were yet to see a single coin. Our curiosity about the coins -- and especially the preservation of the pieces -- could hardly have been greater. In the discussions with our American partners, the question of how to divide up the collection was now our primary focus. How were we to find a fair and, as regarded the organisations that were to receive the proceeds, a reasonable division of a collection that included 8,000 pieces? This question was not at all easy to answer. It was clear that both auction houses would have welcomed the opportunity to auction the entire collection, but Mr and Ms Salton had wanted us to come to a joint agreement.

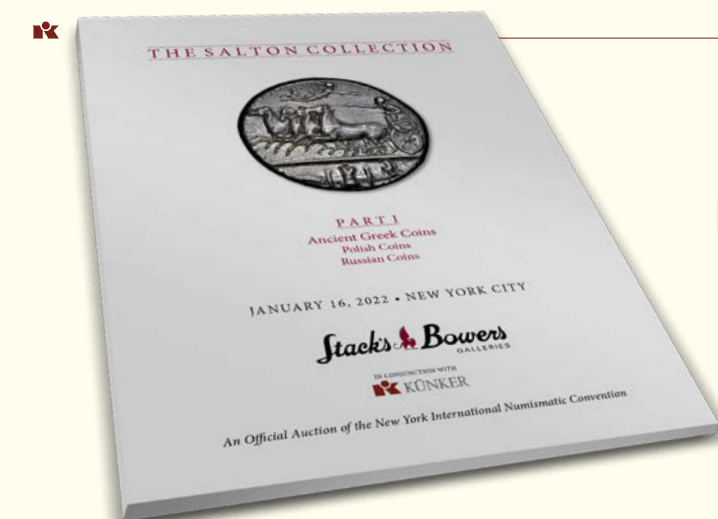
Since we all had the common goal of achieving the best result for the Jewish organisations, while also wanting to set up a worthy and lasting memorial to the Saltons, the solution presented itself surprisingly quickly.

The coins were to be divided according to their places of origin. Those from areas that were likely to achieve better results in the American and Asian markets remained in the USA. The bulk of the European coins, as well as all ancient Roman and Byzantine coinage, were sent off to Osnabrück. Numerically, this part of the collection was considerably more extensive, with more than 6,500 pieces, than the part that remained in the USA.

Since it was the wish of Mark and Lottie Salton to hold the first auction within the framework of the NYINC, the first auction date was set for 16 January 2022, the last day of the coin fair. Since the NYINC is traditionally a numismatic antiquities fair, the coins of Greek antiquity were to be auctioned at this time. In addition, at the request of our American partners, the Polish and Russian coins were added to that auction. As the results indicate, this selection was well made.

*Safely packed, the collection  
was shipped from the ANS  
to Stack's Bowers Galleries.*





Lot number 4079  
Italy. Bruttium. Kroton.  
Stater (Nomos), ca. 425-380 B.C.  
Estimate: USD 1.500  
Hammer price: USD 17.000



Lot number 4097  
Italy. Bruttium. Terina.  
Stater (Nomos), ca. 440-425 B.C.  
Estimate: USD 5.000  
Hammer price: USD 29.000



Lot number 4104  
Sicily. Akragas.  
Tetradrachm, ca. 460-450/46 B.C.  
Estimate: USD 8.000  
Hammer price: USD 24.000



Lot number 4142  
Sicily. Syracuse.  
Dionysios I, 406-367 B.C.  
Dekadrachm, ca. 405-400 B.C.  
Estimate: USD 100.000  
Hammer price: USD 300.000



Lot number 4173  
Sicily. Siculo-Punic.  
Uncertain Punic Mint.  
5 Shekels (Dekadrachm), ca. 264-241 B.C.  
Estimate: USD 40.000  
Hammer price: USD 100.000



Lot number 4188  
Kingdom of Macedon.  
Alexander III (the Great), 336-323 B.C.  
Distater, Amphipolis Mint,  
ca. 325-323/2 B.C.  
Estimate: USD 10.000  
Hammer price: USD 52.500



Lot number 4310  
Peloponnesos. Elis. Olympia.  
Stater, „Zeus“ Mint;  
engraved by Da-,  
ca. 424-420 B.C (89th-90th Olympiad).  
Estimate: USD 10.000  
Hammer price: USD 46.000



Lot number 4390  
Poland. Danzig.  
Sigismund III.  
Medallic 7 Ducats, ND (1592).  
Estimate: USD 100.000  
Hammer price: USD 300.000



Lot number 4391  
Poland.  
Sigismund III.  
Medallic 10 Ducats, 1595. Vilnius Mint.  
Estimate: USD 100.000  
Hammer price: USD 400.000



Lot number 4403  
Poland.  
John Casimir.  
2 Ducats, 1660-GBA. Lviv Mint (GBA).  
Estimate: USD 10.000  
Hammer price: USD 95.000



Lot number 4414  
Russian Empire.  
Peter I (The Great).  
2 Rubles Novodel, 1722. Pattern.  
Estimate: USD 50.000  
Hammer price: USD 95.000

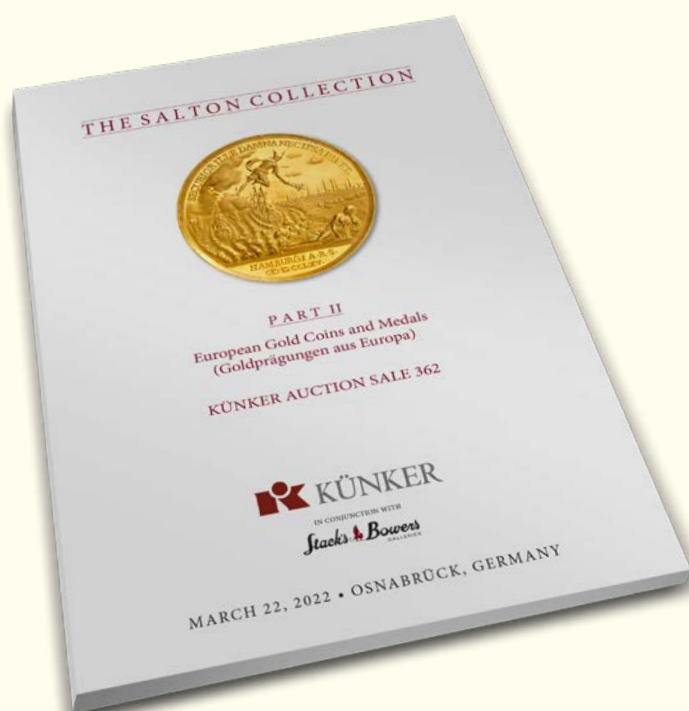
	Content of the auction	Location and date	Auction house responsible
Part I	Ancient Greek Coins, Polish Coins, Russian Coins	16 January 2022, New York, New York International Numismatic Convention	Stack's Bowers Galleries
Part II	European gold coins	22 March, 2022, Osnabrück	F. R. Künker GmbH & Co KG
Part III	English Coinage in Gold and Silver	22 August, Chicago, World's Fair of Money	Stack's Bowers Galleries
Part IV	Roman coins and Byzantine coinage	September 2022, Osnabrück	F. R. Künker GmbH & Co KG
Part V	Ancient Greek Coins and English Coinage in Gold and Silver	January 2023, New York, New York International Numismatic Convention	Stack's Bowers Galleries
Part VI	European silver coins	January 2023, Berlin, within the framework of the World Money Fair	F. R. Künker GmbH & Co KG

Overview of currently scheduled auction dates

On 4 October 2021, the material to be auctioned through Künker arrived in Osnabrück. More than 6,500 coins and medals now had to be unpacked and -- once again -- matched piece by piece with the corresponding inventories. On our side of the Atlantic, Fabian Halbich and his team took over this task, which was carried out as efficiently and as carefully as in the USA by our American partners. In the end everything matched, and at long last we were now able to take our first look at the collection.

## The Salton Collection

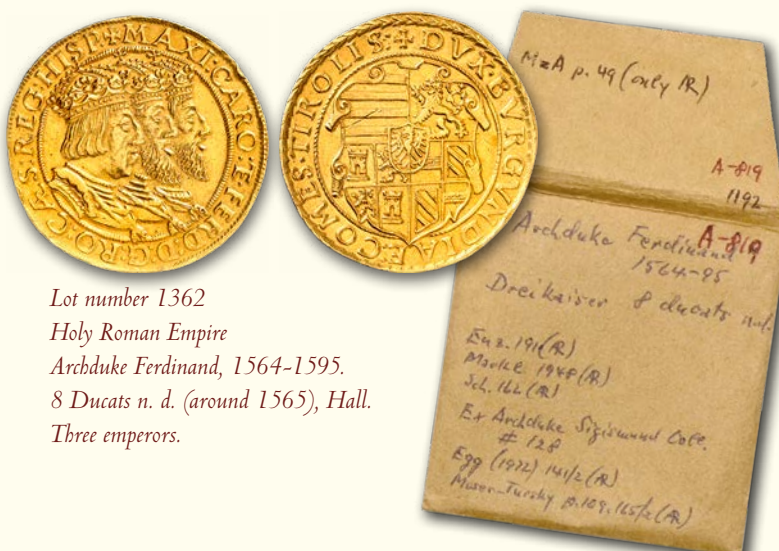
When my father and I first got a chance to look at the coins and medals, we could hardly believe our eyes. The collection that Mark and Lottie had assembled was unique and full of surprises. Hardly any other collection we had seen in the past contained so many rarities and gems from the broad spectrum of European coinage history; in gold and silver from almost all European countries, with many pieces coming from famous pre-war period collections.



Lot number 1289  
Netherlands  
Province Holland.  
10 Ducats 1687.  
From the dies of the silver ducaton.



Lot number 1328  
Switzerland  
Canton of Grisons.  
16 Francs (Duplone) 1813, Bern.  
Calandagold.



Lot number 1362  
Holy Roman Empire  
Archduke Ferdinand, 1564-1595.  
8 Ducats n. d. (around 1565), Hall.  
Three emperors.



Lot number 1371  
Holy Roman Empire  
Ferdinand III., 1625-1637-1657.  
9 Ducats 1629, St. Veit.



Lot number 1480  
Bavaria  
Maximilian I., 1598-1651.  
8 Ducats 1598, Munich.



Lot number 1551  
Teutonic Order in Mergentheim  
Archduke Maximilian of Austria, 1585-1590-1618.  
12 Ducats 1614, Hall.



Lot number number 1628  
City of Regensburg  
8 Ducats n. d. (1745-1765), with title of Franz I.



Lot number 1635  
Electorate of Saxony  
Johann Georg I and August, 1611-1615.  
6 Ducat klippe 1614, Dresden, on the crossbow shooting  
at the baptism of Prince August, 2nd son of Johann Georg I.

Mark and Lottie not only recorded the exact descriptions on the coin bags in immaculate handwriting, but also noted the presence of the coins in earlier auctions of which they were aware. We have chosen to include these auction occurrences in our catalogue descriptions. Also worth mentioning are the commentary slips that accompany many of these coins. These commentaries put the coins in context from a monetary and historical perspective, explaining the significance of the pieces.

It seems likely that many of these commentaries were written during the period when Mark Salton was still active as a coin dealer in the United States, before moving to Rome in 1966 as head of the Italian branch of the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company. Until then, the Saltons had issued fixed price lists of coins and medals under the name Mark M. Salton-Schlessinger. These sales lists are extremely rare today; it is likely that the circulation at that time was limited to a few copies.

Campan. Quadruple sovereign (or 8 rosenobles) (60.97g), between 1585 and 1587.  
 MONETA AVREA IMPERIALIS CIVITATIS CAMPENSIS large rose, in the center of which  
 the quadripartite shield of Spain.  
 Rev. NON VIDI IVSTVM DERE(LICTVM) NEC SEMEN EI(us) QVAE(reus) PANEM enthroned  
 sovereign (Philip II), crowned and holding sceptre and sword; at his feet the  
 Campan shield.  
 Delmonte 1096note (this mentioned "Unique").  
 van der Chijs 14.3., p.324  
 Frkg. VI. p.566.154.

The monetary union between the imperial cities Deventer, Campen and Zwolle  
 began in 1488, but did not last beyond 1586. Campen proceeded to coin after types  
 and on the weight standards of the ducat current throughout the Empire, the  
 Spanish double ducats after in 1582 the Estates of Overijssel decided to  
 transfer the previously Spanish-owned mint from Hasselt to Campen, and the  
 English system, Fine Sovereign and noble to tie in with the requirements of the  
 English commerce. The Fine Sovereign had been created 1489 by Henry VII,  
 equalling one silver pound or 20 shilling. Originally it weighed 15.55g, but  
 a slight weight reduction took place under Mary and Elizabeth. This quadruple  
 sovereign of 60.97g is based on the 15.25g issue.

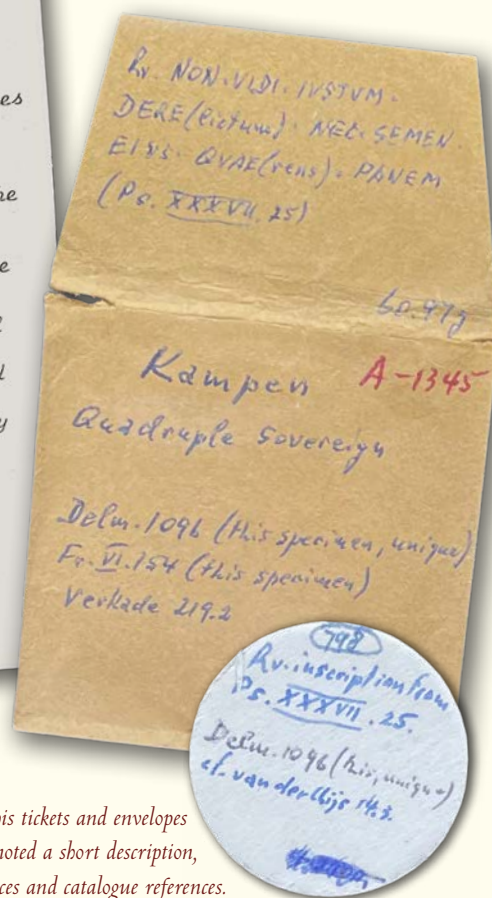
On 1/23/1579 the seven Northern Dutch provinces drew together in the Union of  
 Utrecht, culminating in their declaration of independence from Spain 1581.  
 Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was sent by Queen Elizabeth in 1585 to lend  
 help to the rebellious provinces against the Spanish governor Alessandro  
 Farnese, duke of Parma and Piacenza, nephew of Philip II. Although militarily  
 his expedition was ineffectual, Leicester accepted the title of Governor of  
 the Low Countries, much to Elizabeth's displeasure. He finally was recalled  
 in 1587.

Campan, occupied by German troops, was besieged by forces of the United  
 Provinces commanded by Count Renneberg. On June 20, 1578, the wall was  
 breached and the City taken (Brause Pl.17.)

The reverse legend is a quote from Psalm XXXVII.25

These commentary slips on vellum paper,  
 written by Mark and Lottie Salton, will be  
 included for the winning bidders.

On his tickets and envelopes  
 Mark Salton noted a short description,  
 provenances and catalogue references.



The question now arose as to how Mark and Lottie could assemble such an extensive collection. One must though remember that Mark Salton and his father Felix Schlessinger were arguably the most important coin dealers in Europe before World War II. Many of the major coin shops of that time were run by Jewish families. While many of those families fell victim to the Shoah, some escaped the terror and fled to the United States. Once there, they continued their trading activities in the USA. The Grunthal and Gans auction house is just one well-known example.

Mark and Lottie Salton used their accumulated numismatic knowledge and their old network, some parts of which still functioned in their new home in America. In the postwar period European coins were still not very popular in the USA, and the diversity of European coin history was also largely unknown. In this respect, these coins could be obtained at decidedly cheap prices compared to what had been paid in Europe before the war.

Mark Salton, who was accustomed to different price levels and had extensive related knowledge, must have seen many entrepreneurial opportunities during this time in a market that was just developing and featured historically low prices. I assume that Mark and Lottie's initial goal was to establish the coin trade in European coins in the US and to make a living doing so. However, as both became successful in their new professions, coin trading became more and more of a hobby, and there was a smooth transition from being dealers to becoming the collectors Mark and Lottie Salton.

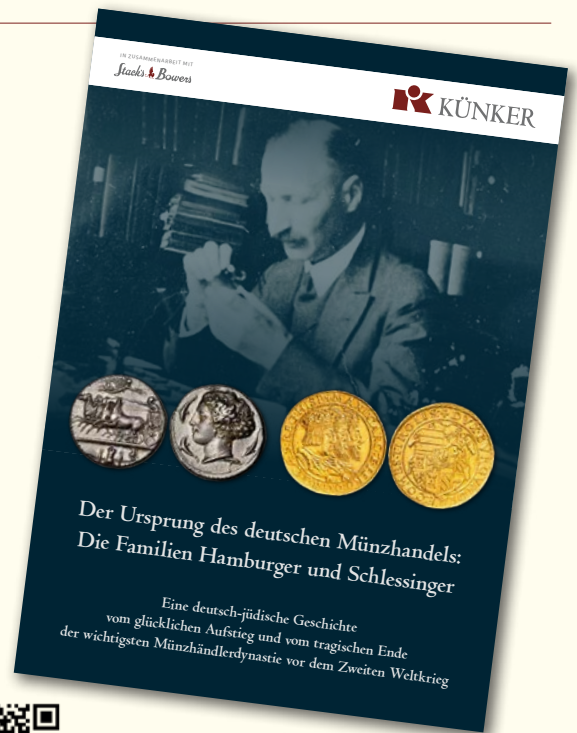
In this respect, the Salton Collection was certainly initially a coin dealer's storehouse. This also explains the commentary slips shown above, which I believe served to introduce the coins to customers who were not very knowledgeable about European numismatics. The idea of transferring the better coins from storage to the so-called "Salton Collection" was, I believe, only conceived when the couple had already achieved some wealth.

This also explains the large stock of coins, because obviously the Saltons rarely sold pieces after 1966, when they relocated to Rome. Everything that seemed easily affordable was bought and put aside. The few exceptions may have been the coins that my father was allowed to take to auction in the 1980s, which may have been instrumental in the Saltons decision to hire us to auction off a portion of their collection after their deaths.

We gladly accept this honourable assignment with humility and gratitude, and we look forward to being able to convey the coins that were owned by the Saltons for such a long time to proud new owners.

Osnabrück, January 2022

Ulrich Künker



Scan the QR code for the brochure  
„Origins of the German Coin Trade:  
The Hamburger and Schlessinger Families“

## Highlights from the Salton Collection of our upcoming auctions 2022/2023



*Brunswick-Lüneburg*

*Johann Friedrich, 1665-1679.*

*Multiple taler (Löser) in the weight of 6 Reichstalers 1679, Zellerfeld, on the occasion of his death 28 December, struck in the weight of 6 Reichstalers.*



*Wallenstein*  
Albrecht, 1623-1634, Duke of Friedland.  
Double Reichstaler 1627, Jitschin.



*Electorate of Saxony*  
Johann Georg I., 1615-1656.  
Thick quadruple Reichstaler 1617, Dresden, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Reformation.



*Holy Roman Empire*  
Tyrol.  
Archduke Sigismund 1439-1496.  
Guldiner 1486, Hall. Dies by Wenzel Kröndl  
Oldest taler struck in Europe.



*City of Cologne*  
Thick quadruple Taler n. d. (1610-1620).  
Quadruple Three kings taler.



*Septimius Severus, 193-211.*  
Aureus 202/210, Rome.



*Vespasianus, 69-79.*  
Sestertius 71, Rome.



*Lucius Verus, 161-169.*  
Aureus 168, Rome.



*Vespasianus, 69-79, for Domitianus.*  
Aureus, 77/78, Rome.



*Vespasianus, 69-79.*  
Aureus 69/70, Rome.

Member: Salton

## TALES FROM THE PAST

*Friends* recently suggested that I jot down some memories, including my family's numismatic background. While I was somewhat hesitant at first, fearful of not being able to completely reconstruct the early Frankfurt period, this turned out to be less of a problem than expected, thanks to family records.

My father's family Schlessinger had for generations been settled in Mainz where the ancestral house, a protected landmark "Löwenhofgasse 4" (formerly called Judengasse) still stood until 1945 when it fell victim to an air raid. Grandfather, after whom I was called Max, died in 1896 at the age of 61. He owned a banking house which included lottery and life insurance agencies, enabling him to give a formal education to his two sons. Gustav the eldest held a doctorate in theology, and Felix the youngest (my father) the equivalent of an M.A., while his four daughters also received what was then considered for girls an above-average general schooling.

Our family's numismatic tradition had its roots in 1863 when Leopold Hamburger, my father's older second cousin, together with a partner, founded the firm of Leopold Hamburger & Baer, the earliest numismatic house established in Frankfurt (except for Rothschild's Coins and Antiques of a century earlier). In their first auction sales, conducted between 1871 and 1873, they offered coins from many periods and regions, from ancient to modern<sup>1</sup>. In 1875 Leopold

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was joined by his cousin Leo Hamburger (brother of my grandmother Röschen Schlessinger, née Hamburger), and the firm consequently was renamed L. & L. Hamburger, domiciled in Frankfurt, Uhlandstrasse 56. After a hiatus of several years, but before the turn of the century, auction activity resumed. I have restricted myself to mention only a few of the most notable sales: Wunderly von Muralt (code name: Raritäten-Kabinett), four sales <sup>2</sup> of rare and historically significant coins, including a rich series of Basel and Geneva which contained amongst other three piefort talers, 1499, 1520 and 1521 of Basel; each of these realized gold marks 3,505.00, a price until then unheard of in numismatics.

Equally important were the three auction sales of the Gnecchi Collection of 5,849 Italian coins, not rivalled in scope by any other Italian sale in this century <sup>3</sup>. The abundance of rarities in both of these collections makes their catalogues indispensable reference sources even to-day. Also that of the Pogge Collection, coins of Pomerania and other Baltic areas<sup>4</sup> was a pioneering work and remained until recently the only authoritative handbook on the series. These and similar auctions helped to establish L. & L. Hamburger as one of the leading international numismatic houses.

Leopold Hamburger died in 1905, leaving Leo the only surviving partner, while Leopold's son Joseph, until then a junior member of the firm, struck out on his own with a substantial series of auctions, the best-known of which is that of the Ritter von Wilmersdörffer Collection <sup>5</sup>.

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It had always been Leo's wish to have his only son Siegmund join him in the firm, now called Leo Hamburger and relocated to Scheffelstrasse 24 (name and address unchanged until 1933), but these dreams were shattered when the young man at age 22 took his own life (it was rumored in connection with an unhappy love affair). This tragic event was the reason why Leo Hamburger suggested to his widowed sister Röschen that her youngest son Felix (1879-1944), up to then apprenticed to a Frankfurt bank, be trained by him in numismatics. As a consequence, Father gave up his banking career in favor of numismatics, and after several years apprenticeship became a partner in the firm.

In 1911 my parents were married. My mother's clan, the Feuchtwanger's lived in Munich to where they had moved from Fürth about a century earlier. Grandfather Louis, in partnership with his brother Siegmund, manufactured food products; their plant, on Grillparzerstrasse, was called Saphir-Werke. One of his kinsmen, Dr. Lewis Feuchtwanger born in Fürth 1805, after graduating from Heidelberg and Jena Universities, migrated to the United States in 1827, where he practiced medicine and opened (1829) a German pharmacy in New York. His claim to numismatic fame derives from his exploits in metallurgy and from his one- and three-cent Feuchtwanger composition pieces. He had developed a copper-nickel-zinc alloy, commonly called "German silver", although Feuchtwanger preferred to name it "American silver". Details of his life and writings have been extensively researched <sup>6</sup>.

My mother Hedwig was fluent in English, French and Italian, and during the first years of their marriage she conducted most of the firm's foreign correspondence. Typewriters were not yet en vogue ; each letter had to be painstakingly written

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by hand and then, again by hand, copied into a "copy book".

A great many auction sales bridged the era from 1905 to 1914, too numerous to be recounted here, but a few cannot remain unmentioned: Gessner (Swiss coins) <sup>7</sup>, Iklé (Swiss gold coins, one of the most extensive collections of its kind) <sup>8</sup>, Gariel (Carolingians, Baden) <sup>9</sup> etc. etc.

When World War I broke out, Father was drafted to serve from 1914 to 1918 on the Western front (amongst other at Verdun), earned the Iron Cross, was twice severely wounded but miraculously survived. Auction activity at Leo Hamburger resumed around 1917 and continued unabated through the German inflation. Prices realized during those years evidence the progressive erosion of the German currency. Uncle Leo, like so many of his generation, could not comprehend that the "good German Imperial Mark" was collapsing and stubbornly opposed anything that might have saved the firm's assets. When it was all over in 1924, only a shadow of its former financial strength remained.

Unfortunately, a great number of important collections went under the hammer during those devastating years. Amongst other, four auction sales of the famous Bachofen von Echt Collection of Swiss coins <sup>10</sup>, at a time when the inflation was rapidly gaining speed; in the fourth of these auctions the greatest rarities sold at prices which a few months later would buy a street car ride. The expertly written catalogues still remain in demand.

In 1923, at the height of the inflation, Father attended the auction of the Enrico Caruso collection which took place at the Brothers

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Canessa in Naples<sup>11</sup>. Passionate feelings from the war years, still strong, were reflected in the seating arrangements: American, British, French and Belgian bidders on one side of the isle, Germans and Austrians on the other, with those from the host country strategically placed in the middle. Caruso originally collected mainly Roman and Italian gold coins, but later branched out into a more general field. The Canessa Brothers had been his main supplier via their New York office opened especially for the purpose. In an introductory address one of the Canessas stressed how numismatics could be instrumental to again promote concord between warring parties.

After stabilization of the currency in 1924, the new "Reichsmark" was established equalling 1 trillion old imperial marks, thus wiping out all financial assets. In that year the first part (out of 7) of the Vogel Collection was brought to market<sup>12</sup>. This auction contained exclusively art medals, many by the great Italian masters of the Quattrocento, and several stone and wood models from the best period of the German Renaissance. For the latter and for the enamelled and jewelled gold medals, "Gnadenpfennige", the Government imposed the condition that they were not to be sold abroad.

By now Uncle Leo, the patriarch of the firm, was getting on in years, and most of the business had to be conducted by Father and the young Hans Nussbaum (to whom I will refer later), especially also the writing of the auction catalogues. Six further Vogel auctions followed comprising continental coins<sup>13</sup>. This exquisite collection had been assembled by Geheimrat Hermann Vogel, an industrialist from Chemnitz who combined humanistic knowledge and fine taste with - last not

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least - the necessary financial means. 1924 also saw the auction of an unusual and interesting collection, consisting of only quarter talers from as many regions and mints as possible<sup>14</sup>. The quarter taler may not be the most spectacular denomination, but many are quite rare and hard to come by. In 1925 the Niclovits Collection of Romans was auctioned<sup>15</sup>. Niclovits, a Budapest resident, had been able to add to his collection many pieces from Hungarian coin hoards and formed them into a comprehensive total.

And then there was the beautiful collection of Prince Philip of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1928)<sup>16</sup>, brought together by many generations. It was particularly strong in the series of Hapsburg, England, France and obsidional coins, with an appendix of a small group of ancients. One of the remarkable pieces was a gold medallion of Constantius II of 4½ solidi, which had been found near the Beresina River in Russia, testimony to one of the ancient trade routes from Constantinople to the Baltic.

My own memories of Uncle Leo and his wife Aunt Meta are still very vivid. They occupied an apartment one floor above the office, to which it was connected by a circular flight of stairs, in a building owned by the firm. The two upper floors were rented to tenants. For my younger brother Paul and me it was an established habit, albeit not always a voluntary one, to pay them a visit on Saturday afternoons.

Dutifully we would stay for a while, but were allowed to browse through a pile of coffee table volumes of which the most sought-after was invariably a colorful world atlas that had seen better days. Uncle Leo impressed little chaps like us as a respect-inspiring person, very lank and tall, always wearing a dark suit and gold-rimmed spectacles. He would routinely question us what we had learned in school the previous week and, where our answers fell short, supplement

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the missing links, followed by his usual admonition "remember what I told you". Once in a while our reward was a handful of poorly preserved Roman coins, too worn to be sold to customers, except to the warden of the Saalburg. The latter regularly made the rounds with all Frankfurt coin dealers to purchase their badly worn, often totally corroded Romans, which he then sold to the tourists as "unearthed on the grounds of the castle".

The office on the first floor, "parterre" as it was called, looked like taken out of a Charles Dickens novel. It consisted of a flight of high-ceiling rooms of varied sizes, mostly lined with book cases, numerous large and small wooden coin cabinets and several safes. The felt-covered tables, surmounted by green lamp shades, were strategically placed near the windows and cluttered with paper work, coin trays, catalogues, more books and the like. The exception was the reception room; here in impressive, somewhat formal surroundings, a library in fine bindings was neatly kept in two large glass-enclosed ebony book cases for use by clients. Herr Schnerb, Herr Hufnagel and three secretaries all were long-time employees. Mr. Hufnagel was an accomplished expert in making plaster casts of coins and medals, needed for the production of plates. Photography of the coins themselves, as we know it to-day, had not yet been developed. The plaster casts were mounted on cardboard sheets to be reproduced by the photogravure method, a system both time-consuming and expensive, which accounts for the relatively small number of illustrations in catalogues of that era.

The oldest of Uncle Leo's daughters, Lotte, was married to David Nussbaum, an art student and talented portraitist, a gift he shared

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with his brother, a painter of some renown. Towards the end of World War I, David became a member of the firm. He possessed a most charming personality - an engaging raconteur - who had a particularly jolly way with children. My brother and I were great fans of his; he once drew our conjoined portraits in a matter of minutes. His vocation was clearly artistic, while he considered numismatics his duty.

Around 1923 David's son Hans joined the firm; trained in numismatics from boyhood on by Uncle Leo and by Father, he combined thorough knowledge with the modesty of a true scientist. Beyond that, Hans shared Father's love for Renaissance coins and medals, choosing for his dissertation the theme "Fürstenporträts auf italienischen Münzen des Quattrocento"<sup>17</sup>. The two men were an ideal numismatic team that worked harmoniously and productively. Their good relationship continued after each had established his own firm, resulting in a number of joint transactions. In 1932 Hans left Frankfurt to settle in Zürich (Bahnhofstrasse 32, building of Bank Leu), while Father had transferred to Berlin already in 1928. Hans' emphasis gradually shifted more toward ancient coins, whereas Father, except for two major ancient auctions (duplicates from the Hermitage), concentrated on continental numismatics, especially those of Germany, Switzerland and Italy. In 1937 a tragedy struck when Hans lost his young life in a plane accident at Paris airport; his seatbelt had not been securely fastened as the plane came in for a rough landing, resulting in mortal injury to him. Numismatics lost a much respected connoisseur and Father a devoted relative, friend and colleague. Uncle Leo had passed away in 1933 at a high age, and thus was spared the suffering of losing also his only grandson.

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Our Berlin office was located in the borough of Charlottenburg, Bismarckstrasse 97/98, an eight-lane tree-lined street, part of the main artery leading West from the Brandenburg Gate. The six-story building had two large apartments of c. 12 rooms on each floor, and the landlord agreed to subdivide our apartment into a residential section of 8 rooms, and an office part of 4 rooms. Father, the two secretaries Fräulein Wachtel and Fräulein Fröhlich, each occupied one room, while the spacious foyer served as both reception and auction room.

Berlin at the time was already home to three professional numismatists: Dr. Philip Lederer, cousin and former associate of Dr. Jacob Hirsch, dealing almost exclusively in ancient coins and antiquities. Edmund Rappaport, specialist in medieval and modern numismatics, a man very set in his ways and extremely careful in entering new ventures; whenever an object outside his immediate field was offered, he would seek encouragement and, if possible, participation from Father. Then there was the firm Robert Ball Nachf., which had been acquired several years earlier by Hugo Grünthal (Henry's father); their store on Wilhelmstrasse was very impressive, with beautiful window displays.

Father's first auction sale after settling in Berlin was that of the extensive Feldheim Collection of Brunswick coins and medals<sup>18</sup>. If I could choose but one piece out of many from this collection, it would be the magnificent silver medal 1545 (2½ Schautaler) of Elizabeth of Brandenburg (widow of Duke Erich I, as regent for her son Erich II, 1540-1584). In view of the specialization of this collection the sale was held in Hannover in collaboration with the Hannover numismatist Henry Seligmann. All our further auctions took place in Berlin, beginning with the substantial Meyerhof Collection<sup>19</sup> of talers and gold coins in 1929, and in that same year the first part (out of 4) of the Nordheim Collection consisting in the main of continental gold and silver coins of superb quality<sup>20</sup>. Leafing through the Nordheim catalogues one is impressed how varied yet comprehensive this collection was constructed, ranging from bracteates to 19th century medals. The third catalogue contained the Swiss series including the rare "Gotteshausbund

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Taler" (the Bachofen specimen, later collection Erich Cahn, Basel <sup>21</sup> ). It was not the general habit in those days for out-of-town collectors to attend auction sales in person, participation was mostly by mail bid or by dealer representation; consequently the number of people present rarely exceeded a dozen, sometimes it was as low as 4 or 5. Unlike to-day, auction sales were not held in hotel facilities, but on the premises of the auctioneer. As each coin came up for bidding, it would be shown by an attendant to anyone wishing to examine it. Occasionally a bidder might look longer than the patience of the others tolerated, yet the atmosphere always remained pleasant and amicable. In 1930 the Frankiewicz Collection of Polish coins <sup>22</sup> was consigned, in partnership with the Leo Hamburger firm. Specialized as it was, and due to the grinding economic depression at the time, the auction attracted only a modest number of participants, out of which four Americans, resulting in a comparatively large percentage of pieces remaining unsold. On the other hand, the outstanding Kirsten Collection (1931) of Hamburg coins and medals <sup>23</sup> drew considerable interest. Kirsten was a Hamburg shipowner, whose collection reflected a high degree of systematic approach, with its nearly complete sequence of dates in each denomination, totalling more than 300 gold florins, ducats, multiple ducats etc., almost 200 talers, and no less than 900 lots of medals. The auction catalogue had come to the attention of Dr. Seelig, surgeon-general of Berlin, whose wife was a native of Hamburg, from a well-known banking family. He felt attracted to Hanseatic coinage and prevailed on Father to help him assemble a collection of gold coins of Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck. Dr. Seelig became a passionate collector who eventually succeeded in bringing together a collection of remarkable scope, also comprising an extensive series of Portuguese coins including those of the early Portuguese type, all in finest preservation. A few years later, during the Nazi period, his collection was looted by uniformed SS-men in his presence and never heard of again (melted?). Dr. Seelig and his wife

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fled to America where they died around 1950 in greatest misery. All they had succeeded in saving was an enamelled and jewelled gold medal "Gnadenpfennig" of Gustav Adolph which Father had purchased for him, a devout Lutheran, from the Duke of Oldenburg. After Dr. Seelig's arrival in New York as a destitute immigrant, he had to sell it for a pittance to a dealer who in turn sold it to the Berry-Hill Gallery from where Melvin Gutman, a collector of Renaissance jewelry, acquired it. After Gutman's death his collection went under the hammer (1969) at Parke-Bernet Galleries (now Sotheby) where this piece fetched \$ 3,000.00; two years later it was resold in Basel<sup>24</sup> and realized 70,000.00 Swiss francs.

A very specialized collection formed by Dr. Richard Gaettens, a native Mecklenburger, was brought to market in 1931<sup>25</sup>. It consisted of extensive series of that region and its cities Rostock and Wismar, from the Middle-Ages to modern times. The catalogue still remains a reference work on the subject. Gaettens, a well-known numismatist, had a vast knowledge of medieval coinage; his enthusiasm would bring to life the beauty of bracteates and the mysteries of deniers in a manner that made the listener perceive the atmosphere that gave rise to those coinages. We also owe to Gaettens the "Archiv für Medaillen- und Plakettenkunde" of which, from 1913 to 1926, he was both editor and publisher, and which until to-day has remained an important tool on the subject. Gaettens was still alive well into the fifties, doubtlessly rejuvenated by a second marriage to a lady less than half his age. After the war, Lottie and I visited him in Neckarsteinach near Heidelberg, and spent a few pleasant hours reminiscing.

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1933 heralded the first of four auction sales of duplicates from the Hermitage Museum, containing 1640 lots of European coins in general <sup>26</sup>. It would be a challenging task to pinpoint from the wealth of this assemblage the most attractive pieces. One of the treasures was a superb taler 1632 of Henri II de Longueville, count of Neuchâtel; very fittingly it was sold to Switzerland. During the exhibition days a Berlin banker, not known to be a numismatist, requested to be shown two extremely rare papal gold coins, a three-zecchini-piece ND of Nicholas V (1444-1455), and a four-zecchini-piece 1598 of Clemens VIII (1592-1605), struck in Avignon. He intimated to be acting on behalf of a royal patron, as it turned out, Victor Emanuel III. Also a priest wished to view those same two coins; he identified himself as a functionary of the Berlin Archdiocese which had received instructions from the curator of the Vatican Collection. In the auction, the King outbid the Vatican on the three-zecchini-piece of Nicholas (now illustrated in CNI vol. XV, pl. XII, no. 21), while the Milanese collector Carlo Gavazzi outbid both King and Vatican on the four-zecchini of Clemens.

The second Hermitage auction <sup>27</sup>, Greek coins, and the third <sup>28</sup>, European gold and silver, and Russian decorations, took place in 1934. The fourth <sup>29</sup> consisted of 1655 lots of Greek coins. The largest buyer in that auction was Leonhard Forrer Sr. of Spink, London, who held bids not only from English collectors and the British Museum but also from Dr. Jacob Hirsch settled in Geneva. Hirsch refused after 1933 to set foot into Germany. Another participant was the then only lady coin dealer in Germany, Miss Hildebrand, a middle-aged lady from the Black Forest. When Fräulein Hildebrand came sailing into the room, decked out in all her finery, proceedings had to be halted for a minute or so, to allow the gentlemen to catch their breath. Then there was Mr. Bernheimer of the well-known art dealer family <sup>30</sup>,

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representing film actor Heinz Rühmann, who bought a number of high-quality coins; each piece had to have a particular merit, be it rarity, outstanding style, or preservation. All in all this auction was remarkable for its large proportion of floor versus mail bid sales.

The coins for these auctions had been delivered to us by the Hermitage curators at the Russian Embassy in Berlin, where also most of the prior negotiations had taken place. When it came to the material for the fourth auction, their price ideas were so unreasonable, unrelated to market reality, that after a day's discussion Father asked to be excused from that consignment. A few days later the comrades had a change of mind and were agreeable to refrain from placing limits. Thereafter matters proceeded in a business-like manner.

This 1935 Greek auction was to be our last in Germany. Towards the end of that year a Nazi ukase excluded Jews from membership in the "Reichskulturkammer", thereby excluding them from any cultural activity including numismatics. We were forced to leave Germany and found refuge in Amsterdam. Before relating our flight I would like to briefly add a few character sketches of several of the more memorable collectors of the Berlin era:

A customer known to every numismatic firm was Count von Lehndorff-Steinort, an avid collector and great connoisseur of coins of Brandenburg and the Balticum, whose family owned one of the largest agricultural holdings in East Prussia. His father, apparently unconvinced of the son's wisdom in handling money, had placed the family fortune into a trust, leaving the son with a monthly allowance large enough to keep him out of the soup kitchen, but not quite sufficient for "the

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good life" so frowned upon by the old man, a stern latter-day Cato the Elder. The young count consequently owed money to every coin dealer on the continent. Once he appeared with us on a Saturday morning and, would you know it, announced he had come to settle a long overdue account. After being told by Father that he was welcome as a visitor, but that on the Sabbath no business could be conducted or discussed, the count nodded understanding and proposed to simply place the money on the table and then leave. Father had to tell him that such circumvention was not feasible either and instead invited him for "Mittagessen" the next day. Later on we learned that the count spread word that Herr Schlessinger was so religious that on Sabbath he would not accept money "not even from a debtor as difficult as me".

Another client was "Inspektor" März, a city official of sorts, very knowledgeable in numismatic history. It was customary to serve coffee and refreshments during auction intermission, and Herr März was heard complaining that his seventh cup of coffee was not as good any more as the first. Years earlier he had met his wife through the intermediary of Hugo Grünthal whom he later held responsible for the sad fact that Frau März did not bear him children. After we were settled in Amsterdam the couple unexpectedly showed up on their return from an Around-Africa cruise on a German ship; <sup>(docked in Rotterdam)</sup> they travelled with a knapsack, had saved all their spending money of foreign currency allowed to passengers for land excursions under existing restrictions, and used it to buy from us a Brunswick Decuple Lösser 1609.

Then there was the Austrian Marquis Kubinsky de Hohenkubin (his nobility title, according to the grapevine had been bought rather recently from

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the Spanish Government). The Marquis had a photographic memory for coins, reference numbers, historic background, briefly stated everything connected to numismatics. He modestly described himself as a man with a champagne taste but a beer pocketbook.

A really well-known character was that retired Italian general who perceived himself as a reincarnation of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, and bitterly resented that the active army brass did not share this assessment. He collected coins of his idols relating to their conquests. The general was very wealthy but quite aged and in frail health, a combination tending to bring out the worst in relatives.

Mention should be made of a numismatist whose friendship with Father extended beyond the purely numismatic, Geheimrat Theodor Eckert, a Cologne notable, collector of papal coins. Eckert's second hobby was the piano, and since Father played the violin they occasionally combined efforts. In particular I remember one evening in Berlin when they treated a group of friends to Schubert's Rosamunde and the first movement of Mendelssohn's violin concerto. They may not have played as well as the New York Philharmonic, yet quite recognizable, with an audience of about two dozen warmly applauding. Both men were Rhinelanders with the typical Rhenish sense of humor. Eckert, deeply religious, was "persona non grata" during the Nazi time and forced to resign his various posts, narrowly avoiding a worse fate. After the war a street in Cologne was named in his honor.

Prof. Kurt Regling, chief curator of the Berlin Coin Cabinet (now Staatliche Münzsammlung), another close friend of Father, was a great connoisseur of ancient coins and of Renaissance medals (already in 1911

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he had written the Lanna catalogue<sup>31)</sup>. His deeply-rooted expertise impressed all who knew this vivacious man, small in physical stature, but endowed with astounding brain capacity matched by a ready wit. I had the privilege of being one of his part-time pupils; as a youngster who had many other things on his mind I may not yet have fully appreciated what a fountain of knowledge was available through such a mentor. Regling was an ardent soccer fan and used to say: "numismatics is my profession, my hobby is watching the weekly game at the stadium". During our Berlin tenure Father had been able to add to the Museum's coin cabinet a golden bulla of Emperor Ludwig IV "the Bavarian", 1314-1347, obverse Emperor enthroned between two lions, reverse View of Rome and the legend ROMA CAPVT MVNDI REGIT ORBIS FRENA ROTVNDI<sup>32)</sup>. When Regling died (c.1934) his will stipulated that his extensive library be sold to Father.

As to myself I was born January 12, 1914, in Frankfurt (the only thing I have in common with Goethe), went to school first there, and subsequently in Berlin. After graduation from Siemens-Oberrealschule (equivalent to the American M.A.), with the curriculum emphasizing Natural Science, History and Germanistic, I matriculated at the Handels-Hochschule and, during university recesses, worked at the Berlin banking house E.G.Kaufman. Although I had decided at a young age to follow into Father's numismatic footsteps, my parents felt that this should be preceded by a formal education not confined to numismatics. Little did I realize<sup>then</sup> how essential their wisdom would prove in later years. In 1933, when the Nazis usurped power, things changed fundamentally until, for us, they culminated in 1935

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with the afore-mentioned exclusion of Jews from the "Reichskulturkammer" headed by Goebbels, the "culture expert". But what to do? Where to go? For emigration to the USA a long waiting period was required, even after a US citizen could be found to issue a guaranty that the subject would not become a public charge; it had to be accompanied by sworn evidence ("affidavit") that the guarantor was able to make good if need should be. Most European countries, deeply in the grip of the depression, were not keen on admitting immigrants who might further burden labor markets, an instinct which combined with fear of, and aversion to, things German. Among the few exceptions was Holland, a traditional haven for Marañños, Huguenots, Puritans, Salzburg Protestants and other persecuted minorities. In 1936 we applied at the Amsterdam police for resident status; I remember my first call there, when the officer who issued a one-year permit added benevolently: "when you come to me next year I expect you to address me in Dutch"; and so I did.

The Berlin Nazi bureaucracy, after very difficult negotiations, gave permission to take along our library, while the coins had to be deposited with the Reichsbank; they were released some 6 months later and forwarded. All financial assets were confiscated under various headings: "emigration tax (Reichsfluchtsteuer)", "currency regulations" etc. etc. The new beginning was far from easy, aggravated by coming from an overheated German economy driven by war preparations and protected by strict monetary controls, into the economic depression that plagued the free world. We rented a modest two-room office on Prinsengracht 701, where one of the first visitors was Maurits Schulman (father of Hans) offering his cooperation. Similar encouragement was received from many in the numismatic fraternity, especially

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from O. van Kerkwijk, curator of the Hague Penningkabinet (now Leiden), his successor Evelein, Zwierzina, nestor of Dutch medal collecting, Fredericks, collector of Renaissance medals, van Giffen, professor at Groningen University, and others.

Also outside of numismatics we made many friends: Gerrit van der Veen, a medallist, Frans Duwaer whose father owned a printing house and produced our catalogues and price lists (I shall revert to them later) and many others.

While still in Berlin, we had begun to develop relationships in Scandinavia, an endeavor we continued from Amsterdam, travelling about once a year to Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. In 1937 we bought the Sune Eberhard Crona Collection of Swedish medals, which we auctioned that same year<sup>33</sup>. Crona, a city councillor of Göteborg, attended the auction himself to buy for Swedish collectors and for various museums.

On an earlier trip to Helsinki I had met Baron de la Chapelle whose ancestors had fled to Sweden in 1685, after the revocation of the Nantes Edict, and later settled in Finland. De la Chapelle had assembled a large series of Swedish copper plate money, including an eight-daler plate salvaged from a ship sunk in Åbo harbor. We were able to buy the series from him en bloc; it had to be sea-freighted to Amsterdam, and later on was sold to Sweden. He also consigned to us his small collection of Russian coins and of ancient gold, auctioned in 1939<sup>34</sup>.

Amongst the best-known Scandinavian numismatists was Axel Ernst in Odense, Denmark, a good friend of ours. He was mayor of Odense during the war, and succeeded through skillful diplomacy and determination to preserve his citizen from the worst.

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When war clouds gathered over Europe, Father and I made an exploratory trip to London, to consider taking residence there. But we were shocked at what seemed to us an extremely high cost of living, specifically regarding rentals and the expense of establishing ourselves professionally. We returned to Amsterdam discouraged. On May 10, 1940, at dawn the Nazis invaded Holland. On that day my mother suffered a serious heart attack at about 9 PM, and a doctor was urgently needed. All telephone connections, public lighting, street cars etc. were out of service to thwart the enemy, and there was a total curfew. Nevertheless I set out by bicycle to call our doctor (about a mile away) and was promptly stopped by a Dutch army patrol. The officer pointed his pistol at my chest with the words: "you are a German spy, I'll shoot you". I was unable to convince him of my identity, but at last a superior was called who was inclined to believe my story and ordered an army car to drive me to the doctor. The occupation of the Netherlands, at first only of a military nature or so it seemed, soon changed into a rule of terror. In February 1941 a German soldier was ambushed by a Dutch sniper, and in reprisal the German SS randomly arrested 600 young men and women in the street. I saw some of the action from about a block's distance and was able to escape. All 600 arrested were reported dead within c. 3 weeks.

Our office was placed under a German administrator and sealed; the keys had to be surrendered. Somewhat later an organization styled "Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg", established for the purpose of pillaging cultural goods in the occupied countries, ordered two locksmiths to cut open the large coin safe with blow torches and took its entire contents away. With unrivalled meticulousness the

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signed report of this looting was left in the office where it was found after the war by my brother, a volunteer in the British Army. The numismatic library too was plundered and, as far as could be ascertained later, was brought to a collection point in Ratibor, Silesia, now outside German jurisdiction. Several of the books, apparently stolen again from the thieves, turned up with a Hamburg coin dealer, and those I was able to buy back.

Encouraged by my afore-mentioned friend Frans Duwaer and others like him, I joined one of the many resistance groups that had been formed. My task was receiving, translating and distributing to the underground the daily BBC bulletins etc. (discovery carried the death penalty). All went well, until I received an order in the mail, signed by the notorious Nazi chief Aus der Fünften, directing me to report at the railway station the following day for "Transportation East". I did not follow the order, and Mr. Alexander Wellensiek, head of the Calvinist school system and an acquaintance of Frans Duwaer, offered to hide me and a friend in his office building on Reguliersgracht 18 in the center of Amsterdam. Mijnheer Wellensiek was a pillar of the resistance movement and after the war was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Oranje-Nassau, the highest civilian decoration of the Netherlands. Lottie and I visited with him on our first post-war trip to Europe; as we departed he gave us a small package "to be opened only after your return home". It contained an 18th century Dutch wall tile he had taken out from the mantle piece in his house where, regardless of the great danger to his own life,<sup>4</sup> had sheltered me. It now hangs in our dinette as a daily reminder of the year 1942 and of the courage of a dauntless man. Mijnheer Wellensiek died in 1965. We planted a tree in his name in the "Alley of the Righteous" in Jerusalem.

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While in hiding I tried to put the idle time to some use and compiled a numismatic glossary in 5 languages, which proved a little cumbersome without being able to consult any literature.

Mijnheer Wellensiek sheltered my friend and me for about 4 months, during which time he helped prepare our escape from Holland to join the free Dutch forces in England. On September 27, 1942, we (my friend, his fiancée, and I) set out by train to Tilburg where a farmer awaited us with bicycles. During the night we crossed the Belgian border through ditches, wire fences and marshes; in Belgium the resistance movement provided false ID cards which, we were told, were valid in Belgium and in the French border region. We crossed into France with the morning shift of Belgian mine workers, took a street car to Lille, then a train to Paris, Gare du Nord which was swarming with German security guards; but mixed into the crowd we walked straight past the checkpoint. In Paris we had an hotel address in the Rue Pigalle (!) where no identities would be checked, a "place" where German officers, in and without uniform, would bring their dates. As instructed we asked for Monsieur Henri who promised to guide us into non-occupied France. Together the four of us took the train to Le Creusot, then a bus to Montceau-les-Mines where Henri disappeared leaving us in the lurch. We entered a little cafe about 8 PM to ask for the way and perhaps obtain some food; the owners were very hostile: "get out quickly, we are afraid, there is curfew; Out!". At that moment the German SS-patrol (2 men) stalked in, did not speak a word of French and thought that we were members of the cafe owner's family. They ordered beer, then another and again another, and after about half an hour they left. Meanwhile a local mineworker had come in who immediately surveyed the situation and signalled with his foot under

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the table that he would help us. He took us to his house where he lived with his wife and two small children, let us sleep in his kitchen, and at 4 AM we walked together through meadows and hills to a point from where a flagpole with the swastika could be seen on top of a hill. "That's the Demarcation line between occupied and unoccupied France" he said, and "Bonne Chance", giving the victory sign. We carefully crept up the hill and then ran towards a wooded area about 200 yards downhill, determined not to stop even if they would shoot at us. After half an hour's walking we came to a country road, and a peasant with a horse-drawn haying machine showed us the way to a village called Genouilly where the local inn-keeper let us stay over night in his attic. Next day through the villages Le Poulet and St.Gengoux to Macon, and from there by milk train to Lyon. In Lyon there still existed, by the grace of Vichy, an "Office Néerlandais" performing semi-consular functions. We were each given a new ID card with the encouraging remark "Don't ever show it- it won't fly". They also bought us train tickets to Perpignan, an 18-hour ride at that time. In Perpignan we stayed for several weeks, until Southern France as well was occupied by the Nazis who moved a few thousand troops into the town. That same day we obtained from the French Préfecture a so-called "sauf-conduit" authorizing travel on a rattling and rickety bus to a mountain "resort" called Amélie-les-Bains where<sup>at</sup> about 7 in the evening the French gendarmerie stopped us. After pleading for solidarity: "Vous êtes français, nous sommes des officiers néerlandais, laissez-nous passer", they said "Allez-y" and that was that. After a hike of about 36 hours up the Pyrenees in pouring rain, we came to a stone hut with a few goats grazing nearby, and an old man inside confirmed that

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this indeed was Spain, Cataluña to be exact. After spending a few hours with him, we continued and<sup>at</sup> about 3 AM came to the village of Massanet-de-Cabrenys where we wanted to give ourselves up at the Guardia Civil station house, but found it closed for the night. There was however a stack of hay in the courtyard where we could sleep for a few hours. At 9 AM someone unlocked the door and we entered. After some linguistic confusion it was arranged to lodge us for a day at the local inn (the size of a railroad car), while the police - the local force consisted of 2 men to assure cover during lunch time - would request instructions on how to handle the case. At 8 AM the next morning the police chief came over to inform us that at 10 AM a car would take us to Figueras. On the way the chief pointed at a straggling hiker with the words: "that's another one like you; we'll catch him in Figueras."

The police station in Figueras was a flourishing operation. They were hosting a crowd of about 60 young, mostly French, illegal border-crossers, partly locked-up in holding pens originally designed as night lodging for drunks, partly playing cards with the guardians of the Law. After about a week all the men were marched to the railroad station, always 10 chained together (the few women were assigned to a "résidence forcée"), for a trip to the internment camp Miranda de Ebro in Northern Spain. The camp held between 2000 and 3000 young men, by far the greater part French and Belgian, about 60 Dutch, with a sprinkling of Poles, Yugoslavs, Norwegians, and even a few Britishers, Americans and Canadians, including Commander Prior, skipper of a destroyer beached during the Dieppe raid, who had escaped from a Stalag; he was later elected Member of the British Parliament.

Conditions in the camp were somewhat less than what you would find in the "Grand Hotel": Sleeping on cement floors without blankets (during the North-Castilian winter), with roaches, lice and millions of other miniature creatures adding life to the situation. A single water fountain served the entire camp population. Food was sparing, but the Spanish soldiers in the adjoining army camp received the same rations. Every morning the entire camp had to assemble in the square to salute the fascist flag; whoever did not bring the proper salute was taken to the barber shop to have a broad cross cut through his hair. Then followed the daily parade of the ragged inmates to the sound of fascist tunes. There was an infirmary and even a dentist, practicing with antediluvian equipment, mainly a pair of pliers. The one existing "sanitary installation" to stretch the term, dubbed by the inmates "General Franco", be better not recorded here.

There were, however, no atrocities, at least not after 1942, when Allied victory was drawing closer, except for an occasional whack with the rifle butt by a nervous guard. On a July day in 1943 the camp commander, accompanied by his bodyguard, appeared in front of the window-less barrack housing the Dutch group, calling from a list the names of 47 of us, whose release had been negotiated by the Netherlands Embassy with the Spanish Government. The next morning a contingent of heavily-armed Guardia Civil escorted us to the local railroad station, where it turned out that there was only one daily train to Madrid, making a one-minute stop in Miranda. The station-master warned that the train as usual would be overcrowded, and that he had no locomotive available for moving an empty railroad car parked on a siding, to couple to the arriving train. "No problem" we answered "the 47 of us will handle this minor detail". We encamped ourselves in and around the railroad car, always under the watchful eyes of the Guardia Civil, and, when after<sup>a</sup> c. 4-hours wait the whistle of an approaching train could be heard, swung into action. The moment the train stopped we pushed the empty car to the main track, after throwing the switch, coupled it to the last wagon of the train, and off we went. In Madrid a functionary of the Consulate awaited us at the station and brought us to a hotel where we were housed, 6 or 8 to a room. During the next few days the Consulate provided clean basic clothing - and by golly, did we need it - then each of us was thoroughly interrogated by the military attaché at the Consulate, to guard against a possible Trojan Horse. Within c. 2 weeks passports had been prepared and our group was sent to Lisbon; there each underwent a medical, the results of which were forwarded to London. I volunteered for the Navy (although not possessing Netherlands citizenship), but was assigned to the Netherlands Embassy in Lisbon. That city during the war was a listening post par excellence and most useful to the Allies. On July 28, 1944, Queen Wilhelmina awarded me the Military Cross of Merit.

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In April 1943, while still in Miranda de Ebro, a post card from my parents arrived, written hurriedly and informing that they were being forced to leave our Amsterdam apartment for transport to the concentration camp Westerbork; several weeks later they were taken to the concentration camp Theresienstadt, to where I was able, after I had begun working at the Embassy, to send food packages with a weight limit of one pound. After June 6, 1944 (Landing in Normandy) all postal communications through France came to a halt, and I asked a friend in Stockholm, Major de Laval, to please send food from there. According to a communication from the Red Cross, received after the liberation of the Netherlands, my parents were transported on October 20, 1944, from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz and murdered there. As a survivor who returned to Holland wrote me, Father was not on the list for that transport - the last one to leave Theresienstadt - but did not want to let Mother go without him.

In June 1944 the extremely distressing news was received that Frans Duwaer and Gerrit van der Veen had been captured by the Nazis, along with 3 others, and that all five had been executed. They had devoted their lives to the cause of Freedom and brought the ultimate sacrifice. Frans Duwaer was an only child; his father, upon learning his son's fate, took his own life.

Towards the end of 1945 my American relatives suggested that I come to the States. Since the German immigration quota had remained unused for 5 years, there was practically no waiting period and, although the Netherlands Government offered me citizenship and a diplomatic post in the Foreign Service, I decided to cross the Great Pond. In July 1946 I arrived in Baltimore harbor on board the freighter "Wellesley Victory" which had accomodation for up to 10 passengers,

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but as it turned out the Baltimore Immigration Service had not received my papers. They threatened the American Export Line (owner of the ship) with a hefty fine if I were to jump ship before receiving permission to land. The Export Line consequently hired a detective to watch me 24 hours a day; he introduced himself by showing his hard knuckles and "don't you try anything funny". He was a little fellow; too hard a sneeze might have blown him overboard. But he let me in on a secret: "they gave me plenty pocket money; we are going to have a good time". He slept aboard the ship in a bunk across from mine, always making sure to keep an eye on me. Next morning breakfast in the galley (ship had taken on fresh supplies), then by bus to the Immigration Office: No papers yet, but they promised to telephone Washington and ordered us to come back the next day. In the meantime the detective showed me around Baltimore; we went to the movies, had lunch somewhere, and in the evening back to the ship. Next morning again Immigration Office, with me sitting on pins and needles and him moaning "Oh, how I hate this place". On the third day the papers had arrived and I was allowed to land. We went back to the ship to get my belongings, and I asked the detective for the way to the railroad station to take a train to New York. "No" he said "you can't do that yet" I first want to introduce you to several of my friends". He escorted me to a saloon where his chums were imbibing. "This is my friend Max" he announced "He has just been admitted as an immigrant to the United States, now that deserves a drink, fellows". One in the group, a 7-footer, got up, banged my shoulder that my knees wobbled and said "Welcome Max, and how do you like America?". They did not let me go for an hour or so, but then, although a little top-heavy, I made it to the station.

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During the first few weeks I stayed with relatives in Uptown Manhattan while hunting for a job, no easy task in 1946; war industries were cutting down and millions of GI's were being demobilized. I changed my name from Max Schlessinger to Mark M. Salton (an action I have regretted ever since). After some intense scouting, a suitable position became available with the International Division of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company (last year merged with Chemical Bank), beginning as an analyst, and subsequently transferring to the Executive Department. In 3 years of evening classes I obtained the American <sup>MBA</sup>~~MBA~~ in International Banking from New York University with the thesis "The Financing of the Italian South". Henry Kaufman, my professor, must have been in a generous mood when he let me graduate cum laude.

Lottie and I were married in 1948 and since then the coin, and in particular the medal, hobby has become hers as well. Taking up numismatics became now possible again, although initially on a limited basis. When Hoyt Miller, a collector of Greek coins, passed away, we were able to purchase from the estate part of his numismatic books, thus providing a starting point for a new library. Occasionally, on Saturdays, I would spend a few hours at the American Numismatic Society, and I remember one instance, when George Miles and I were heading for lunch to the Chinese restaurant at 145th Street, we tried a short-cut through the cemetery, but found the gate on the South side locked. As we scaled down the wall to 154th Street, a youngster watched in horror the two "resurrected escapees" from the cemetery.

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In the early fifties we ventured on our first post-war trip abroad, starting in London with a visit to Alfred Spero's "Antique and Curio Shoppe"; here Mr. Spero, himself an antique and certainly a curio, held court, surrounded by an astounding accumulation of varied treasures and collectibles. Boldly, though not with great expectations, we asked for medals and plaquettes, and were ceremoniously ushered into the Inner Sanctum, a medium-size room where layers of dust seemed to have found an undisturbed resting place in a congenial environment. Some of it was released in a thick cloud when two drawers were pulled from a chest, containing a variety of medals and a mix of other items, ranging from the Quattrocento to the 20th century, all apparently untouched by human hands for decades. A third drawer was solidly jammed and remained unmoved by its owner's pulling and knocking, until Cyril Humphris, training with Mr. Spero at the time, was called to the rescue. Then the unthinkable happened: Mr. Humphris, grossly underestimating his own strength, freed the drawer with an energetic pull, so that it landed on the floor with a loud clatter. As if afraid of Mr. Spero's wrath, most of the medals sought shelter under a costly Louis XV chest of drawers and an elegant Queen Anne cabinet (or was it Hepplewhite? Possibly Early Sears Roebuck?). After everything had been reassembled, we were allowed to examine the medals and make our selection.

In order to make the accounts for our purchases, Mr. Spero dived into the waste basket to retrieve a suitable piece of writing paper. It happened to be a past opera program (Wagner's Walküre), which caused Mr. Spero to regale us about his enthusiasm for Wagner. I was careless <sup>enough</sup> to allow that we too loved operatic music, and that amongst our favorite composers were Donizetti, Mozart, Rossini and Verdi. This aberration of taste was quickly disposed of by Mr. Spero with a terse "rubbish". I had it on my tongue to quote Mark Twain who said about Wagner's music "it really isn't as bad as it sounds";

but to spare Mr. Spero's blood pressure I suppressed the remark. The chosen objects were then professionally wrapped by Mr. Spero into the London Times. The next day he phoned the hotel that still another box with more medals had come to light and invited us to view those as well.

Medals in those days were the step-children of dealers and collectors

alike , their golden age had faded with the dispersal of the illustrious collections of Felix, Loebbecke, Lanna, Vogel <sup>35</sup> etc. Not until several decades had passed were they "rediscovered", and now once again medals are widely cherished as much for their aesthetic qualities as for the humanistic message they convey.

Another stop on our itinerary was Rome. What better place than Via Margutta (a parallel of Via Babuino) to unexpectedly encounter our New York antiquair friend Piero Tozzi. A few days later the three of us together headed for Venice and the home of Dr. Benno Geiger, an Austrian art historian who had spent most of his life in the Lagune City, where he had authored amongst other an extensive study of the Genoese painter Alessandro Magnasco (1667-1749) and also "Memorie di un Veneziano". Geiger's collection of objets d'art extended from Greek marble and bronze to Renaissance medals and plaquettes. Due to his advanced age, he was not disinclined to an occasional sale, so that a Hadrianic marble head (possibly Antinous) and several medals have given us enjoyment ever since.

In Rome we also visited the Vatican Collection and discovered in their coin trays a 5-zecchini piece N.D. (1525), together with a Felix Schlessinger ticket written in my barely legible handwriting. The underlying story of the coin quickly returned to mind: In 1937 a certain Mijneer Limburg, travelling salesman in hardware, had come to our Amsterdam office, describing a gold coin he had seen, with a "bishop holding a hammer". He already had been with his report at the offices of the Schulmans where they had politely bonjoured him out. We suspected that the coin might be a commemorative on the opening of the Holy Port (every 25 years) and encouraged Mr. Limburg to purchase the piece. Indeed it turned out to be the extremely rare issue of Clemens VII (1523-1534), second specimen known (the other being in the King's collection), showing on the obverse the Nativity with the legend HODIE SALVS FACTA EST MVNDI, and on the reverse the Pope symbolically opening the Port, with the triumphant inscription ET PORTAE CAELI APER(tae) SVNT (CNI.XV, Pl.XX.2). We promised Mr. Limburg to sell the coin for joint account and subsequently delivered it to the Apostolic Nuntius in The Hague, Monsignor Giobbe. It is now amongst the Vatican's prized possessions.

In 1966 we transferred to Rome, to head the Bank's Representative Office, covering Italy and the Ticino, for what was intended as a two-year stint in the Eternal City. It was to last however to 1975, interrupted ever so often by a few weeks at New York Head Office to keep up the spit-and-polish. After 9 years of "la dolce vita" we returned to New York, but continued to travel to Italy several times a year until my retirement in 1980. The latter did not affect the Italian political situation which remained - perennially - "desperate but not serious". It is with a certain amount of nostalgia that we look back at our life as "adoptive Romans". Rome, like  
New York,

absorbs its residents and adapts them to its own atmosphere; the process is called "prendere l'aria di Roma" (to breathe the Roman air) and manifests itself in many different ways. You don't set up an appointment at 3PM sharp, but rather "let's say" (diciamo ..., sarebbe a dire ..., insomma ...) between 3 and 4; you do not meet for dinner at 7PM, but between 9 and 11. And, above all, you are ready for an espresso at any hour of the day.

Now about life in retirement: For one thing, your expectancy lengthens, as expressed by companies' paymasters when they wail "retirees never die". For another, you do not have to worry any longer about that loan to an Andean guanacu farm, or to a highway project in a country where the patriots are battling the traitors, both shooting up your investment - and the shareholders learning about it.

But do not expect leisure time to be amply available all of a sudden. Projects crop up you have been postponing again and again for years with the excuse that the treadmill had priority. Now you have to bite the bullet and set to work in earnest. On balance one could say: Given the choice, it's preferable to be young.

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I like to add a few remarks about Mark's retirement: It's great, especially if you like 24 hours a day of togetherness. Now you really come to appreciate how your husband is senatorial material - though not recognized, obvious reason why Washington is the way it is. You wonder how the Bank could continue without him, and indeed they had to merge a few years later! So you grin and bear it, and pray for many more years of married bliss, "salute e gioia".

Hartsdale, N.Y., February 1996

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## Notes:

- 1 - It included a sale of November 17, 1873, 4573 lots, containing the collections Bursio (post-Reformation). Stecki (Polish coins), Vogelstein (ancients and middle-ages) and Zeisberg (early talers, renaissance medals)
- 2 - October 24, 1898 (Germany, Italy, Spain etc.)  
April 10, 1899 (Austria, Russia, England, France)  
October 2, 1899 (Basel, Geneva)  
April 2, 1900 (medals, Charles V, Reformation etc.)
- 3 - January 7, 1902 (Acqui to Lucca)  
May 20, 1902 (Maccagno to Musso)  
January 12, 1903 (Napoli to Zara)
- 4 - November 23, 1903; November 30, 1903 (together 6304 lots)
- 5 - October 16, 1905 (Renaissance medals, France, Baden-Württemberg etc.)  
May 14, 1906 (Germany)  
February 11, 1907 (Germany, Netherlands)  
November 4, 1907 (Russia, Poland, Scandinavia)  
June 21, 28 and 30, 1909 (Austria, Italy, England etc.)
- 6 - Lyman Low, Hard-time tokens, 2nd ed., 1900, reprinted 1955  
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- 13 - November 10, 1924 (Palatinat, Württemberg, Italy)  
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- 30 - Another member of that family is Dr. Franziska Bernheimer, owner of the  
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*The Salton papers after they were acquired by the ANS.  
Photo: ANS/Hill, ANS 2021/3, p. 51, fig. 12.*

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