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Charlotte Sophie Bentinck, Joseph Eckhel and numismatics*

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On dit que vous vous amusez, Madame, à dessiner & à peindre, que vous formez un beau Cabinet de Médailles & d'Antiquités, & que vous faites des progrès étonnans dans toutes les parties des Belles-Lettres.

Jakob Friedrich von Bielfeld to Charlotte-Sophie Bentinck, 16 Dec. 1755¹

If it is true that coin collecting is mostly a male pursuit nowadays, this was even more so in the past. However, there are exceptions to the rule – and they deserve most careful study, not only from a purely historical, but especially from a sociological point of view, particularly in the context of gender research. Since the Renaissance, coin collecting had been a favorite pastime of princes and nobility; by the eighteenth century, it was also popular among members of the intellectual elite and the bourgeoisie. Little is known about the role played by women in the creation of coin collections and a general study on this topic lacks. This article adds information in this respect and ex-

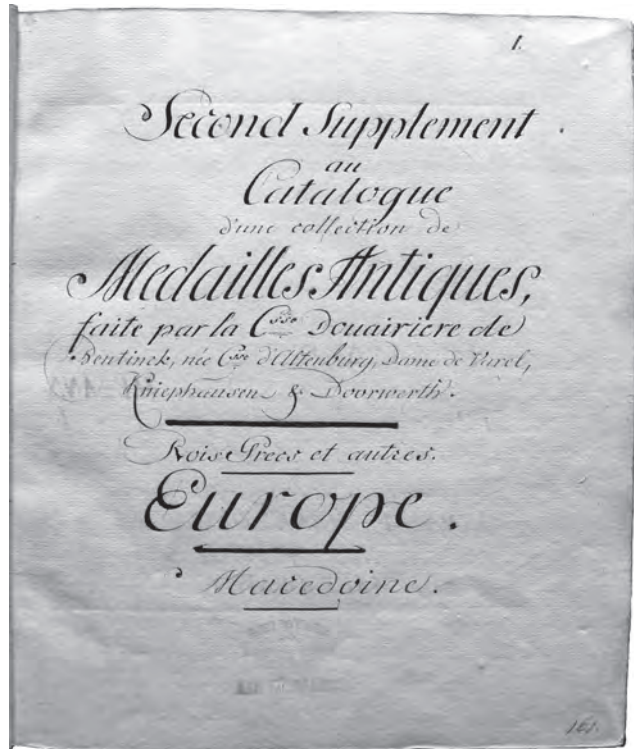
* I am most grateful to Menoucha Ruitenberg for sending me the scans of some of Charlotte Sophie's letters before her correspondence became available online and for sharing information on her correspondents interested in numismatics. I am sincerely thankful to Bernhard Woytek for help in preparing this paper, to Mary Lannin for her comments on the drafts and to Lyce Jankowski for checking the transcriptions of the letter in French included in the appendix at the end of this article. Of course, all remaining errors are mine. Quotations of letters in the footnotes follow the orthography used by the author in the original documents or used in publications.

¹ J.F. von Bielfeld, *Lettres familières et autres* (2 vols; The Hague, 1763), II, 383-384.

plores the numismatic activity of Charlotte Sophie Bentinck, who in addition to being an outstanding personality, was also one of the few women of the eighteenth century to take an active interest in ancient coins.² Charlotte Sophie's coin collection was entirely gathered by herself and was not inherited from a male relative (husband or father), as it was the case for other female collectors of the time.³ Moreover, she did not limit herself to coin collecting, but took her passion to a further level and published her collection in a two-volume catalogue (1787)⁴ followed by a printed (1788)⁵ and a manuscript supplement (figure below).⁶ The fact that her copious correspondence is fully accessible online greatly facilitates research on her, since the letters provide a direct insight into her life and interests.⁷ In particular, her correspondence with the most influential numismatist of her time, the Austrian ex-Jesuit Joseph Eckhel (1737-1798), stands out as it is entirely devoted to numismatic matters.⁸ Another important

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- 2 Among her friends and acquaintances Luise Gottsched (1713-1762) and Louise Honorine Crozat du Châtel de Choiseul (1734-1801) were also interested in ancient coins; see K. Goodman, ed., *Adieu Divine Comtesse. Luise Gottsched, Charlotte Sophie Bentinck und Johann Christoph Gottsched in ihren Briefen* (Würzburg, 2009) 18, note 36, and the letter to Eckhel in Gelders Archief, Arnhem (GA), Familienarchief van Aldenburg Bentinck (Bentinck), no. 1109_0004-23, fol. 10r, 20 Feb. 1790.
 - 3 See for example the case of other eighteenth century female collectors, such as Elisabeth Catharina von Barckhaus (1696-1749) in Frankfurt and Anna Maria Hellenbach (1714-1775) in Bratislava who inherited (part of) their collections from their husbands; see F. Berger, 'Kabinettstücke. Die Münzleidenschaft der Familie Glock und der Barckhaus'sche Kunstschränk (18. Jahrhundert)', in: F. Gerchow, ed., *Frankfurter Sammler und Stifter* (Frankfurt a.M., 2012) 39-53; T. Janura, 'Numizmatická zbirka barónky Anny Márie Hellenbachovej', *Denarius*, VI (2017) 62-67. I wish to thank Hubert Emmerig from bringing the latter to my attention.
 - 4 [C.S. Bentinck], *Catalogue d'une collection de medailles antiques, faite par la C^{55e} Douair. de Bentinck, née C^{55e} d'Aldenburg, dame de Varel, Kniephausen et Doorwerth* (2 vols; Amsterdam, 1787).
 - 5 [C.S. Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d'une collection de medailles antiques, faite par la C^{55e} Douair. de Bentinck, née C^{55e} d'Aldenburg, dame de Varel, Kniephausen et Doorwerth* (Amsterdam, 1788).
 - 6 The library of the coin cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna holds a copy. The title-page reads *Second Supplement au Catalogue d'une collection de Medailles Antiques, faite per la C^{55e} Douairiere de Bentinck, née C^{55e} d'Altenburg, Dame de Varel, Kniephausen & Doorwerth. Rois Grecs et autres. Europe. Macedoine* (no. 16781). I am thankful to Klaus Vondrovec for pointing out this volume to me and for providing me with some images. The existence of a second (manuscript) supplement is also mentioned in A.H.F. von Schlichtegroll, *Notice d'une collection de médailles antiques, Grecques et Romaines, qui appartenoit autrefois à la Comtesse douairière de Bentink, Dame de Varel, Kniephausen, et Doorwerth* (Munich, 1815) 9.
 - 7 GA, Bentinck, <https://www.geldersarchieff.nl/bronnen/archieven?mivast=37&mizig=210&miadt=37&micode=0613&miview=inv2> (accessed Oct. 2017).
 - 8 On Eckhel, see J. Bergmann, 'Pflege der Numismatik in Österreich im XVIII. Jahrhundert mit besonderem Hinblick auf das k. k. Münz- und Medaillen-Cabinet in Wien. II. Abtheilung', *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XXIV (1857) 296-364, and the recent biographical note in P.F. Mittag, 'Eckhel, Joseph Hilarius', in: P. Kuhlman and H. Schneider, eds, *Geschichte der Altertumswissenschaften. Biographisches Lexikon* (Stuttgart, 2012) 341-343. The annotated edition of Eckhel's correspondence is currently being prepared by Bernhard Woytek and myself as a result of the project 'Joseph Eckhel (1737-1798) and his numismatic network', which was carried out at the Austrian Academy of Sciences between 2013 and 2015 (FWF, project no. P25282; leader: B. Woytek; project associate: D. Williams).

Title-page of Bentinck's manuscript supplement, post 1788 (*Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Library of the Coin Cabinet, no. 16781*)



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source for reconstructing the countess's numismatic interests and the making of her catalogue – which was made possible thanks to the assistance of two other women – is a letter written on 30 November 1788 to the French magistrate and collector Louis Robert de Saint-Victor (1738-1822), which is partly transcribed at the end of this contribution.

Bentinck's coin collection

Charlotte Sophie's coin collection was the result of a life-long interest in numismatics. At the age of twelve she had already expressed in an autobiographical portrait her passion for history,⁹ which probably led to an interest in antiquities and ancient coins.¹⁰ As she candidly wrote in 1779, in a letter to the French antiquarian Jean-

⁹ 'J'aime surtout les livres d'histoire'; A. Soprani and A. Magnan, *Une femme des Lumières. Écrits et lettres de la comtesse de Bentinck 1715-1800* (Paris, 1997) 13.

¹⁰ On her collection of antiquities, see F.C.L. Sickler, 'Zwei merkwürdige Antiken', *Curiositäten der*

François Séguier (1703-1784),¹¹ this inclination was somewhat innate and did not result from her place of residence, her studies, nor a particular mentor.¹² However, in her immediate circle, her husband Willem Bentinck (1704-1774) and her beloved cousin Albrecht-Wolfgang, Count of Schaumburg-Lippe (1699-1748), with whom she lived after divorcing from her husband in 1740,¹³ both collected coins and antiquities as well.¹⁴ Moreover, in 1788, the countess confessed to Louis Robert de Saint-Victor that she had started collecting coins to escape the loneliness of an unhappy marriage,¹⁵ starting with a series of the twelve Caesars and then expanding her interest far beyond Roman numismatics.¹⁶

Charlotte Sophie had been collecting at least since 1737 (when she was 22 years old)¹⁷ and by 1745 she owned 2500 Roman Imperial and Republican coins,¹⁸ approximately half of the total offered for sale by her heir in 1815.¹⁹ At that time, more than 4500 coins were advertised: the vast majority of the collection still consisted of Roman coins, to which about 1000 Greek coins had been added. In particular, Charlotte

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physisch- literarisch- artistisch-historischen Vor- und Mitwelt, II (1812) 170-174. In a letter to Louis Robert de Saint-Victor the countess mentions the exchange of ancient artifacts with the Count of Caylus (1692-1765); GA, Bentinck, no. 968_0024, 30 Nov. 1788; see the transcription at the end of this article.

11 On Séguier's many learned interests, see G. Audisio and F. Pugnière, eds, *Jean-François Séguier 1703-1784. Un nîmois dans l'Europe des Lumières* (Aix-en-Provence, 2005).

12 'J'ay vieilli avec la patien de l'antique, Monsieur, sans que rien la justifie chez moy; ny mon éducation, ny le país que j'habitte, ny mes liaisons, ny mes connoissances, rien absolument ne la facilitoit, ny ne luy estoit favorable. Je vis dans une région ingrate, où les Greqs ny les Romains n'ont laissé nuls monuments de leur séjour; je ne trouve personne pour m'instruire, pour me guider'; 14 Oct. 1779; E. Germer-Durand, 'Découvertes archéologiques faites à Nîmes et dans le Gard, pendant l'année 1872. Octobre 1872. I. Une comtesse passionnée pour la numismatique', *Mémoires de l'Académie du Gard. Année 1875* (1876) 180.

13 Soprani and Magnan, *Une femme des Lumières*, 25-43.

14 Willem Bentinck had bought some Roman coins during his *Grand Tour*; see H.S. Haasse, *Ich widerspreche stets. Das unbändige Leben der Gräfin Bentinck* (Hamburg, 1997) 64. On the collection of antiquities and coins of the Count of Schaumburg-Lippe, see H. Bendig, 'Numismatische Beziehungen zwischen Oldenburg und Schaumburg-Lippe. Eine unbekannte oldenburgische Medaille', *Bremer Beiträge zur Münz- und Geldgeschichte*, I (1997) 104; Haasse, *Ich widerspreche stets*, 247; H. Bendig, 'Nachtrag zu "Numismatische Beziehungen zwischen Oldenburg und Schaumburg-Lippe"', *Bremer Beiträge zur Münz- und Geldgeschichte*, III (2001) 166.

15 GA, Bentinck, no. 968-0017, 16 Aug. 1788: 'J'ay été exposée, jeune, à de forts grands chagrins; je vivois alors seule, isolée, fâchée contre le monde, dans une campagne, éloignée de toute société; on me conseilla, de m'amuser de médailles antiques'.

16 GA, Bentinck, no. 968_0021-0026, 30 Nov. 1788; see the transcription at the end of this article.

17 In 1790, Bentinck wrote to Eckhel that she had been collecting for 53 years; GA, Bentinck, no. 1109_0004-23, fol. 9v.

18 Soprani and Magnan, *Une femme des Lumières*, 127.

19 Von Schlichtegroll, *Notice d'une collection*. The fate of the Bentinck collection is beyond the scope of this paper; on this topic see U. Bornscheuer, 'Das Bentinck-Donopsche Kabinett – eine beachtenswerte Antikensammlung der Goethezeit', *Erfurter Münzblätter*, VII (1999) 33-34; M. Schlapke, 'Zwei keltische Münzen als Altfunde vom Dolmar – ein Beitrag zur Gruppe der stark barbarisierten Athena-Nike-Nachahmungen', *Alt-Thüringen*, XLI (2008-2009) 276-278. One may add that some specimens passed into the Hedervar collection; see D. Sestini, *Descrizione di molte medaglie antiche greche esistenti in più musei* (Florence, 1828) 7-8.

Sophie favoured silver and bronze specimens, especially the large bronzes. She preferred good-looking, elegant pieces with a beautiful patina, elaborate reverse scenes and monograms.²⁰ She acquired coins from friends and acquaintances in Amsterdam, Saxony, Hungary, as well as contacts in more ‘exotic’ places like Constantinople, Syria, Morocco, and Thessalonica.²¹ She received coins through the mediation of her friend Louise Gottsched,²² from the archdeacon of Gdańsk Carl Benjamin Lengnich (1743-1795),²³ and from the Swiss-born archaeologist and coin collector Friedrich Samuel Schmidt von Rossan (1737-1796), who acted as her main agent in Frankfurt.²⁴ Gabriele Lancillotto Castelli, Prince of Torremuzza (1721-1792), offered her a group of Sicilian coins²⁵ and the German numismatist Johann Christoph Rasche (1733-1805) sent her eleven Roman Republican and eighteen autonomous Greek coins.²⁶ Moreover, during her many travels the countess was able to enrich her collection of coins and antiquities,²⁷ visit distinguished cabinets and meet other collectors and numismatists. Between 1754 and 1755, she met the curator of the coin cabinet of the Prince-Elector of Saxony Johann Gottfried Richter (1713-1758),²⁸ the classicist Johann Friedrich Christ (1701-1756)²⁹ and the physician and numismatist David Samuel von Madai (1709-1780) in Leipzig.³⁰ During these years she also met a young and still unknown Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), who was visiting Saxony and

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20 Germer-Durand, ‘Découvertes archéologiques’, 181-182.

21 Letter to Eckhel, GA, Bentinck, no. 1109_0004-23, fols 9v-10r.

22 See letters by L. Gottsched to a ‘Herr Hofrath v. M.’, likely David Samuel von Madai (Goodman, *Adieu Divine Comtesse*, 82, note 38); H.D. von Runckel, ed., *Briefe der Frau Louise Adelgunde Victorie Gottsched geborne Kulmus* (3 vols; Dresden, 1771-1772), II, 292-294, 297-299.

23 In particular a *solidus* of Theodosius II for Eudocia (J.P.C. Kent, *The Roman Imperial coinage*, X. *The divided Empire and the fall of the western parts AD 395-491* (London, 1994) 259, no. 256) was sent in recognition of a copy of her coin catalogue; see C.B. Lengnich, ‘II. Berichtigungen’, *Intelligenzblatt der Allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung vom Jahre 1791* (29 Jan.), col. 102, referring to idem, *Nachrichten zur Bücher- und Münzkunde*, II (1782) 395-405. For other coins see [Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d’une collection*, 56 and 240.

24 The documents in the Gelders archive attest to the regular shipment of coins, numismatic books and antiquities; see GA, Bentinck, nos 987-990.

25 A list of coins offered for sale by Torremuzza is in GA, Bentinck, no. 1032, 30 Aug. 1776.

26 Bornscheuer, ‘Das Bentinck-Donopsche Kabinett’, 32.

27 K.B. Hase, ‘Bentinsche Münzsammlung’, in: J.S. Ersch and J.G. Gruber, eds, *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (168 vols; Leipzig, 1813-1889), I-9, 46-47 mentions, albeit without source, travels in Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. Bornscheuer, ‘Das Bentinck-Donopsche Kabinett’, 31-32.

28 On Richter, see P. Arnold, ‘Johann Gottfried Richters Entwurf “Wie ein Müntz Cabinet in gehöriger Ordnung zu rangiren.” Ein Beitrag zur Sammlungsgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts’, in: *Florilegium Numismaticum. Studia in honorem U. Westermark edita* (Stockholm, 1992) 3-12; idem, ‘Das Dresdener Münzkabinett im 18. Jahrhundert. Von der fürstlichen Repräsentation zur wissenschaftlichen Münzsammlung’, in: H. Winter and B. Woytek, eds, *Numismatik und Geldgeschichte im Zeitalter der Aufklärung. Beiträge zum Symposium im Residenzschloss Dresden 4.-9. Mai 2009* (Vienna, 2015), 15-16.

29 On Christ, see T. DaCosta Kaufmann, ‘Antiquarianism, the history of objects, and the history of art before Winckelmann’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, LXII (2001), 539.

30 Goodman, *Adieu Divine Comtesse*, 18. Bentinck enthusiastically refers to her acquaintances in Leipzig in a letter to Saint-Victor; GA, Bentinck, no. 968_0023, 30 Nov. 1788; see the transcription at the end of this article.

helped him get acquainted with Christ and Richter.³¹ In 1756, while in Vienna, she visited the collection owned by the general-director of the Imperial collections Joseph Angelo de France (1691-1761)³² and arranged to meet the Jesuit numismatist Erasmus Frölich (1700-1758).³³ Furthermore, among others, she corresponded on numismatic topics with members of the Paternò Castello of Biscari family³⁴ and Francesco Saverio Landolina Nava (1743-1813)³⁵ from Sicily, the philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812)³⁶ and the poet and writer Christoph Friedrich von Derschau (1714-1799)³⁷ from the German-speaking countries. She was also in contact with Jan Chrzciciel Albertrandi (1731-1808),³⁸ librarian of the king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, who discussed some coins with her and visited her in Hamburg in the autumn of 1790.³⁹

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- 31 On Winckelmann in Saxony, see G. Heres, *Winckelmann in Sachsen. Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte Dresdens und zur Biographie Winckelmanns* (Leipzig, 1991), in particular for his stay in Dresden, 88-105. On Winckelmann and Bentinck, see GA, Bentinck, no. 968_0023, 30 Nov. 1788, at the end of this article.
- 32 On de France, see P. Berghaus, 'Joseph Angelo de France (1691-1761). Bankier, Diplomat, Sammler, Galeriedirektor, Lebemann', *Berliner numismatische Forschungen*, IV (1990) 95-99.
- 33 Goodman, *Adieu Divine Comtesse*, 96-97. On Frölich as a numismatist, see F. de Callataÿ, "'The father of the father.'" The decisive role of Erasmus Frölich (1700-1758) for Viennese numismatics and beyond', in: B. Woytek and D. Williams, eds, *Ars critica numaria. Joseph Eckhel (1737-1798) and the development of numismatic method*, forthcoming. A three-year research project directed by Bernhard Woytek on the correspondence of the Austrian numismatists Erasmus Frölich and Joseph Khell von Khellburg began at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2017 (FWF P29068).
- 34 Bentinck had the address of Giovanni Francesco Paternò Castello of Biscari (1749-1803) in her address book; see A.F. Aubrey Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie Countess Bentinck. Her life and times, 1715-1800* (2 vols; London, 1912), II, 305, no. 201. A copy of a letter generically addressed to a prince of Biscari is in GA, Bentinck, no. 162_0256-0259, 29 Mar. 1788.
- 35 Aubrey Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie*, vol. 2, 305, no. 202. A copy of a letter to Landolina is in GA, Bentinck, no. 162_0062-0067.
- 36 Aubrey Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie*, II, 294, no. 43. Letters between Bentinck and Heyne covering the years 1781 and 1789 are in GA, Bentinck, no. 687. On Heyne and numismatics, see M. Heidenreich, *Christian Gottlob Heyne und die Alte Geschichte* (Munich-Leipzig, 2006) 314-317; C. Boehringer, 'Heynes numismatische Forschung und die Begründung der Münzsammlung', in: D. Graepler and J. Migl, eds, *Das Studium des schönen Altertums. Christian Gottlob Heyne und die Erstehung der Klassischen Archäologie* (Göttingen, 2007) 105-109.
- 37 See for example von Derschau's interpretation of the type of Bentinck's alleged coin of Ada of Caria in GA, Bentinck, no. 511_0058-0060. The coin discussed in this letter is probably a heavily tooled specimen of Perinthus, Thrace, struck under Severus Alexander; see E. Schönert, *Die Münzprägung von Perinthus* (Berlin, 1965) 242-243, nos 788-789. [Bentinck], *Catalogue d'une collection*, II, 1009; [Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d'une collection*, xxvi-xxxviii.
- 38 Albertrandi is recorded in Bentinck's address book; see Aubrey Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie*, II, 308, no. 259.
- 39 See references in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM), Antikensammlung (AS), Korrespondenz Neumann (Neumann), IIIa, fol. 88; 23 Apr. 1791: 'L abbe Albertrandi bibliothecaire et ami du R. de Pologne, a passe, par hasard, ici l automne passe. Il est trop estimé pour ces connaissances, notamment en antiquites et la numismatique semble etre sa pation favorite (...) je luy ay montré autent de mes medailles qu il m a ete possible, dans le tres peu de sejour qu il a fait (...)'

She rarely bought entire collections: in order to avoid the problem of duplicates, she preferred to acquire single pieces.⁴⁰ One of the most remarkable additions was a group of 265 specimens previously owned by the Frenchman Abraham Joseph Michelet, seigneur d'Ennery (1709-1786),⁴¹ whose remarkable coin collection (ca. 22.000 ancient and modern coins) was sold at an auction in Paris in spring 1788.⁴² Many buyers and agents from England and Holland participated.⁴³ Among these was also the Dutch printer and coin dealer Pieter van Damme (1727-1806),⁴⁴ one of Bentinck's closer correspondents,⁴⁵ who played a role in the publication of her coin catalogues.⁴⁶ Among other pieces, Bentinck acquired many rare contorniates and 'medallions' that did not make it to the printed supplement,⁴⁷ but were recorded later in her manuscript supplement.⁴⁸ The presence of interesting coins from the prestigious d'Ennery collection was emphasized for commercial purposes after her death, in the context of the sale of her collection, and made her collection particularly famous in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁹ However, contemporary numismatists also often maligned her collection due to the forgeries present in it, which they detected on the basis of her catalogues.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ Germer-Durand, 'Découvertes archéologiques', 181.

⁴¹ On d'Ennery and his coin collection, see A. Blanchet, 'Notice sur le numismate Michelet d'Ennery et lettre de lui', *Revue Numismatique*, IV-6 (1902) xxi-xxix; Th. Sarmant, *La République des Médailles. Numismates et collections numismatiques à Paris du Grand Siècle au Siècle des Lumières* (Paris, 2003) 223-225.

⁴² [C.-P. Campion de Tersan and F.-P.-J. Gosselin], *Catalogue des médailles antiques et modernes, principalement des inédites et des rares en or, argent, bronze, etc. du cabinet de M. d'Ennery, écuyer* (Paris, 1788).

⁴³ A list of the buyers who won most of the lots of the d'Ennery collection is in Sarmant, *La République des Médailles*, 224.

⁴⁴ On Van Damme, see C. Dekesel, 'The unholy relationship between a numismatic scholar and a wheeler dealer', in: Woytek and Williams, eds, *Ars critica numaria*, forthcoming.

⁴⁵ Aubrey Le Blond, *Charlotte Sophie*, II, 299, no. 112. Letters between Bentinck and Van Damme in GA, Bentinck, no. 502., cover the years 1784-1795.

⁴⁶ He discussed the arrangement of the coins with Bentinck and supervised the printing of the volumes in Amsterdam; see GA, Bentinck, no. 502_0086-0091, Bentinck to Van Damme, undated.

⁴⁷ Bentinck bought the entire lot of 'Medallions de bronze, et contorniates du haut et du bas-Empire', [Campion de Tersan and Gosselin], *Catalogue des médailles*, 397-444, and other Greek coins.

⁴⁸ See note 6 above.

⁴⁹ In 1812, Domenico Sestini (1750-1832) refers in particular to the Bentinck 'medallions' and suggests to Gaetano Cattaneo (1771-1841) to visit Coburg 'dove è quello, che ereditò i medaglioni della Contessa di Bentink'; R. La Guardia, *La corrispondenza tra Gaetano Cattaneo ed Enrico Sanclemente (1810-1814)* (Milan, 1993) 51, note 190. Special emphasis is given to these specimens in von Schlichtegroll, *Notice d'une collection*, 5.

⁵⁰ The Danish archaeologist Georg Zoëga (1755-1809) discussed some of the pieces with Friedrich Münter (1761-1830) in a letter written on 28 Nov. 1789; see Ø. Andreasen and K. Ascani, eds, *Georg Zoëga. Briefe und Dokumente*, II-V (Copenhagen, 2013), II, 401. See Zoëga's remarks in another letter to Münter as well; Andreasen and Ascani, eds, *Georg Zoëga*, II, 332. Joseph Eckhel also warned his readers in the review of coin collections in the first volume of the *Doctrina*; J. Eckhel, *Doctrina numorum veterum* (8 vols; Vienna, 1792-1798), I, clxxvii.

The coin catalogues

A two-volume catalogue was published in Amsterdam in 1787, but Bentinck had been working on it at least since 1778, when it was finished and ready for the copyist by October of that year.⁵¹ In the same period, around 1780, the artist (and countess's natural son) Carl Weisbrod (1743-1806) moved to Hamburg and started working on the illustrations of the most remarkable pieces.⁵² The first volume comprises the coins of the Hellenistic kings, Roman Republican coins and Roman Imperial bronze coins arranged according to size (large, medium, small). The second volume describes the Roman Imperial gold and silver coins and the Greek autonomous specimens (coins of 'peoples, islands and cities') arranged geographically under 'Europe', 'Africa' and 'Asia'. As mentioned above, a first supplement was printed in 1788 and includes the etchings of some specimens not illustrated in the previous volumes. A second manuscript supplement followed. The copy kept in Vienna comprises 201 numbered pages and bears no date.⁵³ The coins are generally not numbered, except for those acquired in the d'Ennery auction, for which the numbers refer to those used in the 1788 sales catalogue.⁵⁴ Written in French, the catalogue and the supplement were printed in 500 copies each, not to be sold on the market, but in order to be distributed as gifts among the countess's correspondents, so that she might learn about 'le jugement que les connoisseurs porteront de quelques morceaux que j'ose citer de preference, et sur lesquels j'embitionne des décisions'.⁵⁵

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Contemporary reviews were quite positive. Among the reviewers we find the German man of letters Friedrich Nicolai (1733-1811),⁵⁶ the German-Danish scholar Friedrich Münter⁵⁷ and the already mentioned Christian Gottlob Heyne.⁵⁸ In 1782, the

51 Germer-Durand, 'Découvertes archéologiques', 185 (letter to baroness von Kurtzrock, 14 Oct. 1779). In the avant propos of her *Supplément* Bentinck writes that her catalogue was completed in 1773 – perhaps a typo; [Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d'une collection*. See also references in the letter transcribed at the end of this article; GA, Bentinck, no. 968_0025.

52 Soprani and Magnan, *Une femme des Lumières*, 127; H. Vollmer et al., ed., *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (37 vols; Leipzig, 1999), XXXV, 310; Goodman, *Adieu Divine Comtesse*, 12.

53 See note 6 above.

54 [Campion de Tersan and Gosselin], *Catalogue des médailles*.

55 Germer-Durand, 'Découvertes archéologiques', 185.

56 F. Nicolai, Review of [Bentinck], *Catalogue d'une collection*, *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, LXXVII (1787) 586-598.

57 [F. Münter], Review of [Bentinck], *Catalogue d'une collection*, *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (12 Nov. 1787) (271) 385-392, and idem, Review of [Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d'une collection*, *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* (2 Sep. 1789) (273) 633-636. For the authorship of these reviews see the letter by G. Zoëga in Andreasen and Ascani, *Georg Zoëga*, II, 401.

58 [C.G. Heyne], Review of [Bentinck], *Catalogue d'une collection*, *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (4 Aug. 1787) (123) 1225-1232 and idem, Review of [Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d'une collection*, *Göttingische Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (3 Oct. 1789) (158) 1577-1584.

latter had published an essay on two ‘highlights’ from Bentinck’s collection,⁵⁹ which are known to be counterfeits today: a bronze ‘Otho’, actually a tooled second century bronze coin of Alexandria in Egypt,⁶⁰ and a forgery of ‘Iunia Fadilla’.⁶¹ All the reviews underlined the extraordinary numismatic and historical knowledge of the aristocratic lady. They stressed the importance not only of the Roman coins published, but especially of the Greek ones, praising their geographical arrangement.⁶² In particular they expressed their appreciation for the many illustrations included in the text. They all mentioned some of the most remarkable pieces in her collection, sometimes correcting mint attributions, reading of legends and historical explanations given by Bentinck and adding their own interpretations. They acknowledged the straightforward way in which Bentinck expressed her doubts on the authenticity of some of the specimens. In one review, Heyne complained that the French text and the transcription of the legends of the coins described in the printed supplement had not been properly and thoroughly proofread.⁶³

The publication of the catalogues was an important opportunity for the countess to enlarge the number of contacts and brought her collection growing visibility among scholars. In 1789, she declined official recognition offered by the Académie de Rouen, because she felt unworthy of it.⁶⁴ As expressed by Charlotte Sophie in 1779, she perceived herself as an amateur, a self-taught enthusiast, someone who had acquired the skills to identify the portraits of the Roman emperors and read the legends on the coins through mere passion for the subject, without having studied ancient Greek or Latin and lacking other formal education.⁶⁵ She was desperately in

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59 C.G. Heyne, ‘De numo Iuniae Fadillae Augustae et de numo Othonis aereo graeco e museo Ill.mae Comitissae de Bentinck’, *Commentationes Societatis Regiae Scientiarum Göttingensis per annum MDCLXXXI*, IV (1782) 113-124.

60 [Bentinck], *Catalogue d’une collection*, I, 187-188. See M. Amandry and A. Burnett, *Roman Provincial Coinage. Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian (AD 96-138)* (10 vols; London-Paris, 1992-), III, 5791.

61 [Bentinck], *Catalogue d’une collection*, I, 306. The piece was recognized as being a forgery already by Eckhel, *Doctrina numorum veterum*, VII, 297.

62 The geographical arrangement of the Greek coins had been developed a few decades before; see O. Mørkholm, ‘A history of the study of Greek numismatics’, *Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift (1979-1980)* 7 and 9; Arnold, ‘Das Dresdener Münzkabinett’, 17.

63 [Heyne], Review of [Bentinck] *Supplément aux catalogue d’une collection*, 1578. Bentinck had to copy and revise the supplement herself at the age of 72, as the assistant who had helped her with the catalogue was no longer available; letter by Bentinck to Pieter van Damme; GA, Bentinck, no. 502_0086-0091, fol. 1v.

64 Soprani and Magnan, *Une femme des Lumières*, 127.

65 ‘La science numismatique en est une tres compliquées, et qui en exige absolument nombre d’autres, dont je suis totalement depourvue. Les langues, la cronologie, l’histoire, la géographie, le dessein, l’architecture, tout cela doit être possédé à fonds avant d’entrer en lice. Or, de tout cela rien absolument n’habite chez moy, qu’une tinture superficielle de l’histoire, qui ne fournit pas une goutte dans cet immense Océan’; Germer-Durand, ‘Découvertes archéologiques’, 183. On Charlotte Sophie’s education, see C. Randig, ‘“Honnete homme” und “femme des Lumières”’. Charlotte Sophie Reichsgräfin von Bentinck, geb. von Aldenburg. Zur 300. Wiederkehr ihres Geburtstags’, *Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert*, XL (2016) 15-29, and her contribution in this volume.

need of a guide, someone who could introduce her to numismatic method.⁶⁶ she first turned to Jean-François Séguier in Nîmes, who died in 1784; then, she came in contact with Joseph Eckhel in Vienna.

Contacts with Joseph Eckhel

In the autumn of 1787, when the correspondence between the 73 year-old Bentinck and Eckhel started, the latter was the director of the cabinet of ancient coins of the Imperial collections and professor of numismatics at the University of Vienna.⁶⁷ He was already a well-established figure of the *République des Médailles*, having published several volumes on ancient coins,⁶⁸ and was working on his main publication: the *Doctrina numorum veterum*, an eight-volume reference work that summarized and displayed in a systematic way all the knowledge on ancient numismatics available in his day.⁶⁹ Bentinck wrote to Eckhel, asking for his feedback and comments on the catalogue of her coin collection and thus started a lively correspondence that lasted at least until 1792.

The archives of the coin cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna treasure, among others, a bound volume containing Eckhel's passive correspondence.⁷⁰ This collection of letters is clearly the result of a selection probably made after Eckhel's demise (1798) and was presumably kept in the archives as a reference for future curators of the imperial coin collection. There are no private letters; it is a

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66 'sans metode, sans guide'; Germer-Durand, 'Découvertes archéologiques', 183. The same concerns, especially the lack of general reference works, were shared by other scholars of the time approaching the field of numismatics; for the case of Georg Zoëga see D. Williams and B. Woytek, 'Zoëga studente di numismatica. Il soggiorno a Vienna (1782) e i contatti con Joseph Eckhel', in: K. Ascani, P. Buzi and D. Picchi, eds, *The forgotten scholar: Georg Zoëga (1755-1809). At the dawn of Egyptology and Coptic Studies* (Leiden-Boston, 2015) 103-106.

67 On Eckhel as professor, see W. Szaivert, 'Die akademische Lehre der Numismatik in Österreich im 18. Jahrhundert', in: Winter and Woytek, eds, *Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*, 469-472; P.F. Mittag, 'Eckhels numismatisches Lehrbuch. Die "Kurzgefaßten Anfangsgründe zur alten Numismatik" und ihre Übersetzungen', in: Woytek and Williams, eds, *Ars critica numaria*, forthcoming.

68 J. Eckhel, *Numi veteres anecdoti ex museis Caesareo Vindobonensi, Florentino Magni Ducis Etruriae, Granelliano nunc Caesareo, Vitzaiano, Festeticsiano, Savorgnano Veneto, aliisque* (Vienna, 1775); idem, *Catalogus musei Caesarei Vindobonensis numorum veterum distributus in partes II., quarum prior monetam urbium, populorum, regum, altera Romanorum complectitur* (Vienna, 1779); idem, *Sylloge I. numorum veterum anecdotorum thesauri Caesarei* (Vienna, 1786); idem, *Descriptio numorum Antiochiae Syriae, sive specimen artis criticae numariae* (Vienna, 1786). On Eckhel's first steps in the Republic of Letters see D. Williams, 'From collection to system. Eckhel in Italy and the Numi veteres anecdoti', in: Woytek and Williams, eds, *Ars critica numaria*, forthcoming.

69 Eckhel, *Doctrina numorum veterum*.

70 'archives no. V'; see D. Williams and B. Woytek 'The scholarly correspondence of Joseph Eckhel (1737-1798). A new source for the history of numismatics', *Akten 6. Österreichischen Numismatikertag, Haller Münz-Blätter*, VIII (2015) 45-56; B. Woytek 'Joseph Eckhel and his network of correspondents: a research project on numismatics in the Age of Enlightenment', in: M. Caccamo Caltabiano et al., eds, *XV International Numismatic Congress Taormina 2015. Proceedings* (Rome-Messina, 2017) 299-302.

strictly scholarly correspondence, mostly addressing numismatic issues. Despite the fact that letters by Charlotte Sophie are missing in this group of documents, contacts between the two have long been known to scholars. Letters addressed to Bentinck, in fact, are among the earliest ones by Eckhel to have been published⁷¹ and also inspired part of the novel *Der Dunkelgraf* by the German novelist Ludwig Bechstein (1801-1860), who included excerpts in his work, as well as summaries of some passages.⁷²

It was possible to gather eleven documents of the correspondence between Eckhel and Charlotte Sophie. The letters are scattered among several archives and are only partially published.⁷³ They are mostly written by Eckhel and were likely sold on the market in the early/mid-nineteenth century, entering private autograph collections that ended up in public libraries later. One may safely assume that other letters are still in private hands, or in public archives not related to Bentinck or Eckhel. The correspondence provides many insights into Bentinck's collection, especially regarding the specimens coming from the d'Ennery sale, an auction in which Eckhel participated (through an agent) without managing to acquire a single piece.⁷⁴ At the same time this correspondence reveals a livelier and somewhat more 'authentic' Eckhel, as compared to the way he appears in other letters or his publications. He replied in German to Bentinck's letters in French and often provided straightforward judgements on numismatic matters. For example, he admits that he is only interested in coins from a historical point of view, and not because of their rarity or value.⁷⁵ He shares his thoughts on contorniates, a class of material that still puzzles numismatists today, and suggests keeping them separate from 'medallions'.⁷⁶ Generally, the tone is

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71 J. Friedlaender, 'Ein Brief Eckhel's', *Berliner Blätter für Münz-, Siegel- und Wappenkunde*, III (1866) 279-282; idem, 'Briefe von Eckhel', *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, III (1881) 220-228; and A. von Sallet, 'Ein Brief Eckhel's', *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, VIII (1881) 121-125.

72 L. Bechstein, *Der Dunkelgraf* (Frankfurt a.M., 1854). Some excerpts included in the novel belong to letters later published by von Sallet, 'Ein Brief Eckhel's' and Friedlaender, 'Briefe von Eckhel'. Part of Bechstein's collection of letters was auctioned by Rudolph Lepke at the end of the nineteenth century; see von Sallet, 'Ein Brief Eckhel's', 121, footnote.

73 Bechstein, *Der Dunkelgraf*, 24-25; Friedlaender, 'Ein Brief Eckhel's' and idem, 'Briefe von Eckhel'; von Sallet, 'Ein Brief Eckhel's'; GA, Bentinck, no. 1109_0004-23; Berlin, Bode Museum, Münzkabinett, Benoni Friedlaender Briefwechsel; Tartu, University of Tartu, Friedrich Ludwig Schardiuse autograafide kollektsoon, 780; Trieste, Biblioteca Civica, Fondo Usigli U 872, no. 5146; KHM, AS, Neumann and KHM, AS, Archiv, 26, ff. 489-494.

74 Friedlaender, 'Briefe von Eckhel', 223. In particular the following coins are discussed: [Campion de Tersan and Gosselin], *Catalogue des médailles*, nos 2298, 2315, 2420, 2424, 2466, 2482.

75 Friedlaender, 'Briefe von Eckhel', 222.

76 'Ich habe diese Parthie [sc. the chapter of his *Doctrina* dealing with the contorniates] mit vieler Anstrengung ausgearbeitet. Doch hätte ich niemals Lust, sie unter die andern Medaillonen zu setzen, weil sie nicht gleichzeitig, und allemal nur Aftermedaillen sind, sondern aus ihnen lieber eine besondere Suite zu machen'; Tartu, 780, fol. 1v. On the study of contorniates from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, see P.F. Mittag, 'Die Erforschung der Kontorniaten in der Renaissance und deren Wirkung bis ins frühe 18. Jahrhundert', in: U. Peter and B. Weisser, eds, *Translatio nummorum. Römische Kaiser in der Renaissance. Akten des internationalen Symposiums. Berlin 16.-18. November 2011* (Berlin, 2013) 179-186; B. Woytek, 'Siegebert Haverkamp (1684-1742) als Numismatiker', in: Winter

very amicable; with joking references to Eckhel as a ‘father confessor’ who mercilessly judges Bentinck’s numismatic mistakes.⁷⁷

From a methodological point of view, it is interesting to observe that on more than one occasion Eckhel refrained from judging the authenticity of specimens, stressing the importance of the autoptic analysis of the coins. He asked for drawings, but above all plaster casts, tin foil or fish glue impressions.⁷⁸ Eckhel critically reviewed Bentinck’s catalogue, providing open and frank comments on several suspicious specimens. Moreover, the presence of so many peculiarities – for example some coins of the Bosphoran Kings, at that time rarely to be found in coin cabinets across Europe⁷⁹ – led him to assume that the countess owned a great number of forgeries.⁸⁰ Charlotte Sophie’s reply was a lengthy 26 pages. Showing exceptional strength of mind, yet at the same time great humility, she stressed her abilities as a coin collector and the broadness of her numismatic network; she reviewed each piece questioned by Eckhel, sometimes providing details on its acquisition, commenting on its state of preservation and on some occasions admitting her doubts on its authenticity.

Eckhel and Bentinck mainly disagreed on the judgement of the works of the sixteenth-century Flemish numismatist Hubertus Goltzius (1526-1583).⁸¹ Eckhel was fighting against the general reluctance of the scholars of his time to abandon Goltzius’s works (full of fantasies and pastiches) as the main reference for Greek coins.⁸² Using a strong metaphor from the world of hunting, Eckhel declared Goltzius to be a ‘deadly threat’ to those who followed him.⁸³ The countess, on the contrary, admired

and Woytek, eds, *Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*, 499-502.

77 Tartu, 780, fol. iv. See also a passage in Friedlaender, ‘Ein Brief Eckhel’s’, 281.

78 Friedlaender, ‘Briefe von Eckhel’, 223. On the reproduction of ancient coins in the eighteenth century, see M. Mulsow, ‘Hausenblasen. Kopierpraktiken und die Herstellung numismatischen Wissens um 1700’, in: A.C. Cremer and M. Mulsow, eds, *Objekte als Quellen der historischen Kulturwissenschaften. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (Vienna, 2017) 261-344.

79 [Bentinck], *Supplément aux catalogue d’une collection*, 18-19. The coins are authentic: Ninithimeus, Bosphorus, AD 234/235; D. MacDonald, *An Introduction to the History and Coinage of the Kingdom of the Bosphorus* (Lancaster, PA, 2005) 109, no. 593. Teiranes, Bosphorus, AD 276/277; *Ibidem*, 116, no. 631. Thothorses, Bosphorus, AD 285/286; *Ibidem*, 117, no. 634. On the history of numismatic research on Royal Bosphoran coins, see F. de Callataÿ ‘Early numismatic research on royal Bosphoran coins (XVIIth-XVIIIth century)’, *Scripta Antiqua*, IV (2015) 561-592.

80 ‘Ich sehe darin eine Menge der kostbarsten und seltensten Stücke, aber eben dieser Umstand macht, daß sich die ganze Sammlung vor den Augen ächter Kenner in keinem vortheilhaften Lichte zeigt (...) Sollte ein so undenkbares Glück einen Kenner nicht mißtrauisch machen?’, Bechstein, *Der Dunkelgraf*, 25.

81 On Goltzius, see C. Dekesel, *Hubertus Goltzius, the father of ancient numismatics. Venlo-Weertsburg 30.10.1526-Bruges 24.10.1583. An annotated and illustrated bibliography* (Ghent, 1988).

82 ‘Daß er ein gelehrter Mann war, daß er ein schönes Cabinet haben mußte, ist ausgemacht. Aber nicht weniger ausgemacht ist, daß er antike Münzen zu tausenden erdichtet habe’, Friedlaender, ‘Ein Brief Eckhel’s’, 281. On Goltzius’ works on Greek coins, see J. Kagan, ‘Notes on the study of Greek coins in the Renaissance’, in: Peter and Weisser, eds, *Translatio nummorum*, 60-70. On the reception of Goltzius in the eighteenth century, see J. Cunnally, ‘Eckhel vs. Goltzius. The reception of Renaissance numismatics in the Doctrina’, in: Woytek and Williams, eds, *Ars critica numaria*, forthcoming

83 von Sallet, ‘Ein Brief Eckhel’s’, 121-122. Eckhel’s letters with his correspondents from the south of Italy

Goltzius' attempt at organizing the Roman Republican coins in a chronological order,⁸⁴ as opposed to the alphabetical classification according to *gentes* normally used at that time.⁸⁵ Following an idea by Johann Friedrich Christ and Johann Gottfried Richter, probably while in Vienna (1756-1761), Bentinck had even tried to organize the coins owned by count Giuseppe Ariosti (1689/90-1766) according to Goltzius's plates.⁸⁶

Conclusions

In conclusion, Charlotte Sophie Bentinck was not only a passionate and proud collector, but clearly also had a strong interest in the ancient world in general. When it came to ancient coins she was an avid reader,⁸⁷ eager to learn from discussions with other *sçavants*. In the eighteenth century, numismatics was becoming a specialized field of study, a discipline in its own right: Eckhel developed a solid system to critically investigate ancient history through coins. With his empirical attitude he was trying to eliminate the forgeries and fantasies that had been marring the study of coins for centuries – and Bentinck's collection offered many examples of such fakes. Moreover, the countess could provide Eckhel with details on some of the most remarkable pieces from the d'Ennery collection, which were known to the Austrian scholar only from the scanty information found in the sales catalogue. It is not clear why Bentinck's letters were not kept among Eckhel's passive correspondence in the collection in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna; the letters exchanged between the two doubtless are among the most fascinating epistolary documents of Eckhel's life and work. We can only hope that more of their letters will become available for study in the future: we might learn a lot about Eckhel from them – and of course they would also help us better define the role of Eckhel's only female scholarly correspondent in the *République des Médailles*.

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and Sicily espouse this point of view; see D. Williams, 'Joseph Eckhel and his correspondents from Sicily and the south of Italy: the Prince of Torremuzza (Palermo) and Michele Vargas Macchiucca (Naples)', in: Caccamo Caltabiano et al., eds, *XV International Numismatic Congress*, 291-295.

84 On Goltzius's volume on Roman Republican coins, see W. Hollstein, 'Die Fasti Magistratum et Triumphorum Romanorum des Hubert Goltzius. Eine Analyse der Münzbilder', in: Peter and Weisser, eds, *Translatio nummorum*, 71-90.

85 The alphabetical order was introduced in the sixteenth century and was used until the nineteenth century; on this matter, see B.E. Woytek, 'The denarius coinage of the Roman Republic', in: W.E. Metcalf, ed., *The Oxford handbook of Greek and Roman coinage* (Oxford, 2012) 323.

86 Letter to Eckhel, GA, Bentinck, no. 1109_0004-23, fol. 11v-12r. Ariosti's coin collection entered the Imperial collections in 1781; see Bergmann, 'Pflege der Numismatik', 332-333; E. Hassmann and H. Winter, *Numophylacium imperatoris. Das Wiener Münzkabinett im 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 2016) 135, note 270, 173.

87 A list of the books in Bentinck's numismatic library is in von Schlichtegroll, *Notice d'une collection*, 11-16.

Addenda

1.

In a letter written on 30 November 1788, Charlotte Sophie Bentinck wrote to Louis Robert de Saint-Victor, among other things, how she began collecting, shared details on her relationship with Christ and Richter in Leipzig and the making of her catalogue, for which she acknowledged the help of two other women (GA, Bentinck, no. 968_0021-0026). The following is a transcription of the part regarding her numismatic activity. The transcription follows the original orthography:

[0022; f. 1v] Entreprenre après cela, Monsieur, de repondre à cette lettre, qui me confond, n'est en verité pas une chose aisée, et j'en sens en ce moment l'enorme difficulté. Il vous a plû, par une vivacité d'imagination, que nous autres froids allmands concevons à paine, mettre un merveilleux à la composition de mon mauvais catalogue, qui n'est, en realité, qu'une operation simple, et n'ayant requis, que de la patience et du gout pour ces objets. Je vous assure, Monsieur, non pour faire la modeste, ou pour pomper de nouveaux compliments, que je n'ay nulle idée, ny du latin, ny du grec; que celle, que la longue attention, que j'ay dû faire aux inscriptions des medailles, m'ont rendu locales. Ma première jeunesse a été sujette à des vives amertumes. J'ay passé le meilleur tems de ma vie, de 20 ans jusqu'à 32 ou 33 ans, dans le fond d'assez belle terres, mais rongée de chagrins, m'éloignant volontiers de la société, que j'aimais naturellement. On me conseilla, de m'occuper de medailles antiques. J'y repugnois! On me donna sept ou huit Empeereurs en bronze; on exigea seulement de moy, d'en completer, la douzaine. J'établis pour cela une petite correspondance à Hamburg. Je reussis; je m'accoquimai; j'en voulus davantage; je me donnai le père Jobert; Science de Medailles; le hazard me fit acquerir quelques douzaines de morceaux à une auction; parmi lesquelles je trouvai deux ou 3. vraiment belles Grecques. Elles me tournoient la tête; [f. 2r] je me souviens, entre autre, que passionnée uniquement alors, pour le Dramatique François; je croyois mener Cesar et sa fortune, en me trouvant en possession de la tête de la mechante Cleopatre, belle mère de la tout aussi mechante Rodogune. De ce moment, Monsieur, la passion s'en mêla, et vous connoissez le train, dont elle fait aller; sur tout quand quelques gouttes de sang françois eperonnent le flegme germanique. Les difficultés animent! J'en trouvai beaucoup à me procurer et des medailles, et même à comprendre, quels livres me seroient necessaires. Enfin j'eus des hazards heureux de façon, que l'âge de 30. ans, je me trouvai dame souveraine, d'autour de 2500. medailles imperiales et consulaires. Je me croyois un Croesus. Mes affaires m'appelèrent, pour mes peches, à diverses cours. Je quittai en soupirant, je perdis de vuë mes empereurs romains, pour l'antichambre moderne de souverains, mes contemporains, qui ne m'inspiroient rien de semblable. Enfin la même chaine des circonstances me conduirit à Leipzig, ou residoit une Duchesse de Courlande, tante de me mère; c'est là, que je me depiquai, des malices de l'etoile, et que je repris, avec delice, mon gout favori. J'y fis une connoissance et liaison particulière avec les deux plus grands anti-quaires et numismatiques de l'Allemagne alors, [00023; f. 2v] le Professeur Christ, et le Bibliothecaire et C^e de Cour Richter à la tête du Cabinet du P. Electorat de Saxe. J'eus même la bonne fortune, de contribuer à y découvrir, le depuis si celebre Winckelman, enseveli encore dans l'obscurité; j'en fis aviser ces messieurs, qui l'ignoroient, et qui l'ont

mêné ensuite au point de s'élancer dans la carrière, ou il a brillé si lumineusement. C'est à une année et demie de séjour à Leipzig, que j'ay dû la possibilité de mettre une sorte de méthode dans mes petites possessions, l'acquisition des principaux livres requis pour me diriger, et nombre de correspondance pour satisfaire à ce goût passionné. La complaisance de ces messieurs n'avoit point de bornes. Ils me traitèrent, comme vous, Monsieur, mais sans y mettre l'encens flatteur, que la gentillesse françoise seule sait prodiguer. Ils me donnerent des conseils, des directions, de nouveaux chagrins, de nouvelles entraves, vinrent m'arracher à ce délicieux séjour, pour me ballotter au gré de la fortune. Il fallut m'occuper d'avocats au lieu de rois Grecs et de consuls Romains! Tems et moyens tout fut absorbé par Cujas et Bartole; dont les déplaisantes faces, furent substituées, pendant sept ou huit ans, aux phisionomies radieuses des Brutus et des Pompées. Un nouveau caprice d'étoile, après un semestre antique de 7. ou 8. ans [00024; f. 3r] me rapprocha de mes penates, et me percha dans un vieux château, digne de la fée Urgele, et de l'enchanteur Merlin. M^{rs} Christ et Richter étoient morts tous deux. Mais mon cabinet avoit joliment augmenté, et j'avois des correspondances instructives. Les ouvrages de Pelerin parurent alors et firent le charme de ma retraite. Le C^t de Cailus daigna descendre jusqu'à correspondre avec moy. Ma curieuse ignorance l'attendrit. Il m'a envoyé plusieurs jolis morceaux Egyptiens; en recompense d'une amulette Persienne, que j'avois eu le plaisir de luy envoyer. Sà mort vient m'enlever aussi cette flatteuse consolation. Mais je trouvois dans la petite ville, ou je passai 7. ans, un medecin vraiment savant, et genie quasi universel. Sans être anticair il possédoit si foncièrement les langues et l'histoire, qu'à l'aide de ma petite collection, il le devint en peu de tems, au point d'étonner par son stile latin, et ses observations numismatiques, le C^{te} de Cailus, et M^r Pelerin, que j'avois mis à même de juger de sa façon de penser c'est luy, qui me fit sentir la nécessité absolue, de mettre de l'ordre dans mon cabinet, qui avoit déjà quelque consistance. Il me donnoit deux ans, pour en venir à bout; je l'achevai deux ou 3. ans après, à Hamburg, en 4. ou [00025; f. 3v] 5. mois. Il fallut encore quitter mon vieux chateau, mon admirable guide, et venir ici; ou je trouvai pour seule et unique ressource, la femme d'un courtier, personne vraiment singulière, et bien au dessus de son état, tant par ses connoissances, qu'elle ne devoit qu'à elle même, que par un caractère aimable et estimable, qui auroient orné une princesse. Elle avoit la même marotte que moy pour l'antique, elle avoit une petite collection de médailles, qu'elle preferrit à une fort considerable moderne à deux grands cabinets de curiosité et d'histoire naturelle. Elle savoit quelques mots latins, le françois, l'italien; nous travaillames ensemble avec ardeur, à ranger non seulement nos petit trésors, mais encore à en faire le catalogue; elle en allmand, moy en françois. J'eus fait, en 7. mois de tems, mais la cruelle mort, qui me poursuivoit, étoit encore venue me l'enlever, au milieu de mon ouvrage. Je dois ajouter une petite circonstance plus singulière, que tout le reste, et qui doit étonner reellement, bien plus que mon peu de patience, et une excellente loupe qui au fond a seule le merite, de tout ce, que j'ai pû faire, qui vous a pu étonner; c'est d'un phenomene feminin, Monsieur, qu'il me faut vous parler. J'avois il y a 18 ou 19. ans, fait venir de ma patrie du Duché d'Oldenburg, de [00025; f. 4r] la petite ville de Delmenhorst une simple servante, fille d'un habile menuisier. Insensiblement cette fille étoit venue dans ma chambre, et chargée souvent de porter, et de remporter les lajettes de mes médailles. Son ordre, sa propreté, son attention à les remettre en place, me frappèrent. Bientôt elle s'accoutuma, à rester en tiers entre la femme du courtier et moy, quand nous travaillions ensemble. Nous nous l'envoyons frequemment avec des eclaircissemens et des

livres, que vous dirois je enfin, Monsieur, cette même fille le croyez vous? Sans savoir ni le latin, ni le grec, ni le françois, ni l'histoire, connoit bien mieux ma collection de medailles que moy. Je l'envoierai au milieu de la nuit chercher, tel morceau, qu'il vous plaira, en le nomment seulement, et surtout, si je l'indique dans le catalogue; elle connoit chaque morceau; elle est au fait des lacunes; elle discerne au juste les suspects, les fausses; c'est elle, qui entretient dans mon cabinet, l'ordre le plus scrupuleux et la plus grande proprété, qui y range, sans le moindre erreur, les morceaux, que j'acquier, qui, quand on m'en propose, me dit «Vous avez tel morceau, ou vous ne l'avez point, et en voila la difference». C'est elle, qui, quand je copiois les inscriptions latines ou grecques, m'observoit, par [00026; f. 4v] dessus l'épaule, et me disoit «Cette lettre n'y est pas, ou est autrement, vous vous trompez». Enfin, Monsieur, c'est une chose, qu'il faut voir, pour le croire, qui etonne tout Hamburg. Aussi s'appelle telle partout, Monsieur, le professeur Marie, et merite-t-elle d'être connue de vous puisque reellement elle est un vrai metheore. Quel horrible travail vous m'avez fait faire, Monsieur, parler de moi même, pendant une heure!

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2.

Since this paper explores Charlotte Sophie Bentinck's passion for numismatics, it seemed interesting to include a note on a numismatic object that carries her name. The medal, in silver and bronze, was designed by Jean Dassier and sons and struck under Alfred Wolfgang Count of Schaumburg-Lippe in 1748. It commemorates the Treaty of Stadthagen of 1748, which ended the 39-year dispute between the princely Houses of Schaumburg-Lipe and Lippe-Detmold over the possessions of the Lippe-Brake line. As recalled on the reverse, the settlement was reached thanks to the mediation of Charlotte Sophie Bentinck. The obverse depicts the counts Albrecht Wolf-



Bronze medal, Albert Wolfgang Count of Schaumburg-Lippe, 1748 (*Künker auction sale 229, 13 March 2013, no. 6021*)

gang of Schaumburg and Simon August of Lippe in Roman attire, standing side by side with their heraldic shields and shaking hands; at their feet lays the defeated personification of the Discord; on the right is the personification of Peace, and a rocky cave into which two naked figures rush (figure below).⁸⁸

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⁸⁸ On this medal, see E. Demole, 'L'accord de Stadthagen (Lippe) et la médaille frappée à cette occasion en 1748', *Revue suisse de numismatique*, XVII (1911) 280-306; Künker Auction 229, 13 Mar. 2013, lot 6021.

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