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Collection J.R. Lasser (New York)

Siege Coins

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The results of the sale of the 1st part of the J.R. Lasser collection in September 2006 were exceptional. We will offer for sale the second part of this remarkable collection in March 2007, consisting of a whole series of siege coins, mainly of the Low Countries, but also including some foreign pieces. The eighty year's war (1568-1648) is richly represented, including the rarest specimens.

Haarlem besieged by the Spanish troops under don Frederic (December 11, 1572 to July 13, 1573), daalder of 32 stuivers (sols), 1572; Mailliet 47, 14; Delmonte 162a; van Gelder - (cfr 13c but punch 1 of 12,5 mm for the arms of the city). Extremely rare, Very Fine.



(Delmonte 162a)

Although a certain number of magistrates was in favour to surrender, Haarlem refused the king's mercy offered by Boussu and the city decided to resist. The small garrison was led by Wigbout Ripperda, who had convinced the citizens that one could not have any confidence in the Spanish promises. The prince of Orange sent Marnix of Sint Aldegonde to Haarlem in order to organize the resistance. The duke of Alva gave the order to invest the city with an army of 30.000 men, which was achieved on December 11, 1572. On July 13, 1573, the famished city surrendered to don Frederic, the son of the duke of Alva. The whole garrison was killed or drowned, and many prominent citizens were executed. This act of violence increased the hatred against the Spanish government even more, as well under the Catholic as under the Protestant part of the population. On December 21, 1572, emergency daalders were struck, with the arms of the city and the date 1572. Their mass was that of the Burgundian rijksdaalder (29.40 g), of which the rate in 1572, like that of the Reichstalers, was equal to 32 stuivers. Our specimen shows the countermark of a skull, which is the mark of the goldsmith who was in charge of this issue.

Middelburg, the Spanish garrison under Mondragón, besieged by the Beggars (spring 1572-February 19, 1574), ½ velddaalder of 18 stuivers, 1574; Mailliet 84, 17; Delmonte 68; van Gelder 44a. Extremely rare, Extremely Fine.



(Delmonte 68)

Easter Sunday 1572, the citizens of Flushing raised against the Spanish as they did not like the coming of a Spanish garrison. Hernando Pacheco, the engineer of the duke of Alva, sent to the city in order to construct a new citadel and to percept the alcabala, the tax of the tenth, was assassinated in Flushing. The port of the city joined the rebellion and was occupied by the Beggars, which was an important strategic victory, since Flushing controlled the access to the river Scheldt. The Beggars occupied several ports and Veere joined them on May 4. In the large arsenal of Veere, the rebels seized 2.000 naval guns, which just had arrived there in order to reinforce the defense. The location of Veere was of primary importance to reach in Antwerp. Enkhuizen joined the Beggars on May 21, 1572. After Alva had to withdraw his troops out of Zeeland in order to engage them against Mons, still in the hands of the rebels, Boussu was left weakened and powerless. In Zeeland, the Beggars seized Zierikzee too, so that during the summer of 1572, the majority of the cities of Holland and Zeeland had joined the revolt and had recognized the authority of the prince of Orange. Middelburg, the capital of Zeeland, anxious to protect and to preserve its old privileges of staple-right, saw with envy the growing importance of concurrent cities, such as Flushing and Veere. For that reason Middelburg decided to remain loyal to Alva and formed, together with the towns of Goes and Tholen, one of the most important Spanish strongholds in Zeeland. On July 20, 1572, Orange was recognized as stadtholder of Holland-Zeeland and Utrecht (in 1559, he had already been named stadtholder and lieutenant-general of Philip II for Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Voorne and Briel, but was discharged after his escape to Germany). At the end of October, at the head of an army of 3.000 men, Cristobal de Mondragón relieved the town of Goes located near the mouth of the river Scheldt, which was besieged by the Orangists. Meanwhile, Middelburg, faithful to the Spanish government, was still besieged by the troops of prince of Orange. Furious as he was about the enormous expenditures and the military reverses of Alva and don Frederic, Philip II replaced Alva by Requesens at the end of January 1573. Alva, “de helsche duivel” (the diabolic demon) according to the Beggar’s song, left Brussels on December 18, 1573. The new governor general, don Luis de Requesens, had to continue the policy of Alva and tried a second time to subdue Holland and Zeeland. Middelburg was still besieged by the Beggars, since the capture of that town would ensure their position in Flushing and Veere. On August 1, 1573, the Beggars captured Fort Rammekens, the important fortress defending the entry of the port. Meanwhile the Spaniards had tried to install a garrison at Reimerswaal, in order to ensure their safety of movement in Bergen op Zoom. But the admiral of Zeeland, Louis Boisot, prevented that by taking Reimerswaal on November 28, 1573. Requesens then decided to form a fleet near Bergen op Zoom, placed under the command of Romero, with the intention to join it with a fleet formed in Antwerp by Avila. However, the fleet of Romero was destroyed at Reimerswaal by that of Boisot. On February 19, 1574, Mondragón surrendered Middelburg to the prince of Orange whose troops were besieging the town since 1572. On February 20, Orange entered the city, after many Catholics had been allowed to leave it freely. Apart

The Spanish troops under Valdez besieged Leiden since August 21, 1573, but without attacking the city. Meanwhile Louis of Nassau tried to raise troops in Germany, but the constant lack of money gave a lot of problems. Finally, early in 1574, he arrived with his brother Henri and Christoph of Palatinate in front of Maastricht at the head of 10.000 men. But Requesens sent one of his best commanders, Sancho d'Avila, who reinforced the defenses of the city. Louis then moved northwards in order to cross The Meuse near Roermond. But Avila, having reached that point before him, crossed The Meuse near Mook and annihilated the troops of Louis at the Mookerheide (April 14, 1574), leaving the three young commanders among the killed. On March 21, 1574, Valdez withdrew his troops from Leiden in order to help to counter the attack of Louis of Nassau. After the disaster of the Mookerheide, the troops of Valdez returned to Leiden and besieged the town a second time, again without any results. The city resisted and was finally released by the Beggar's fleet on October 3, 1574.

On July 10, 1574, during the second siege, the rate was fixed for the silver coins, as well for those previously struck as for those that were still issued, and was increased by 25 and 12 ½ stuivers to 28 and 14 stuivers.

Oudewater besieged by the Spanish troops under the lord of Hierges (July 19, 1575 to August 8, 1575), tin 40 stuivers, 1575; Mailliet 90, 1; van Gelder 62a. Of the greatest rarity, Extremely Fine.



(van Gelder 62a)

By the end of July 1572, the whole of Northern Holland, located north of the river IJ, was won for the rebellion. The Beggars were in control of the Zuiderzee and were able to take Oudewater with the help of part of its citizens. They also occupied the city and the fortress of Gouda and were in control over Dordrecht, Gorkum, Leiden, Haarlem, Rotterdam, Schiedam, Delft and Schoonhoven. By the end of July, Amsterdam was the only town in Holland that was still in Spanish hands, thanks to its very strong Catholic administration. On July 19, 1572, the representatives of the town of Oudewater joined in the assembly of the States of Holland held in Dordrecht, during which the prince of Orange was recognized as stadtholder instead of the duke of Alva. On July 19, 1575, the Spanish army under the command of the lord of Hierges, lay siege to Oudewater. The attack and the capture of the city took place on August 8. It was completely plundered and its inhabitants massacred. During the siege, the city paid its garrison with tin coins to be exchanged on a later date. The piece of 40 stuivers consists of a tin blank countermarked with six different punches: arms of the city, the date 1575, the value and GODT - MET - ONS.

Zierikzee besieged by the Spanish army under Mondragón (September 28, 1575 to July 2, 1576), tin daalder of 32 stuivers, November 7, 1575; arms of the city, beneath countermark with the date 1575; above, countermark with the lion of Zealand; Mailliet 130, 3; van Gelder 84a. Comes from L. Schulman, June 8, 1992 sale, lot 416; Very rare, Very Fine.



(van Gelder 84a)

As most of the cities of Zeeland, Zierikzee was taken by the Beggars in 1572 and was a member of the States of Zeeland. On September 28, 1575, a Spanish army, commanded by Mondragón, crossed over towards Schouwen, waded through the Zijpe and besieged Zierikzee. Attempts to release the town failed and it surrendered on July 2, 1576. With the authorization of the States, dated November 7, 1575, Zierikzee issued square and round tin pieces, with the value of the daalder (32 stuivers) and its subdivisions. Their minting lasted until May 1576, but they all are dated 1575.

Breda besieged by the troops of William of Orange (August 1577- October 4, 1577), 40 stuivers, 1577, arms of the city surrounded by the legend .IN.DER.NOOT. B.A. 1577; Mailliet 17, 2; Delmonte 181; van Gelder 100a. Extremely rare. Very Fine.



(Delmonte 181)

William of Orange, baron of Breda, was initially educated in Breda and later in Brussels, under the supervision of Mary of Hungary and Charles V himself. That education made him an out-and-out Burgundian nobleman. Through his possessions in Breda he was a member of the States of Brabant and he was in the forefront of the nobility. After the arrival of the duke of Alva, Orange left Antwerp on April 11, 1567, surrounded by all the noblemen who had remained faithful to him until the bitter end. It took hours for all the fugitives to leave the city. From Antwerp he first went to Breda, but as he was not safe there either, he left for Dillenburg, to the Nassau family castle. Breda was taken from him. On April 13, 1571, the Spanish troops were forced to leave the town as the result of a

popular rising. According to the treaty of Marche-en-Famenne (February 12, 1577), which was respected by don Juan, the Spaniards left Breda on March 16, 17 and 18, 1577, and took the road to Maastricht. On March 22, 1577, Francisco Verdugo, who had been appointed governor of Breda by Jerónimo de Roda, member of the Council of State, handed the castle of Breda over to German mercenaries in the service of the king of Spain. That was against the will of the States, which had named their own governor, and against the interests of the prince of Orange, to whom the barony had to be restored according to the terms of the Pacification of Ghent. This agreement specified that the German troops were to be paid by the States and, until the date of the payment, they were allowed to remain in the country, in cities indicated by don Juan in agreement with the Council of State. That explains why in Breda a garrison that was loyal to the king of Spain was maintained, the German regiment of Freundtsperg. Since the end of January, the city had to pay 1.950 guilders every ten days for the maintenance of the troops and 100 guilders per month for colonel Freundtsperg. Although the Pacification of Ghent expressly stipulated the restitution of the properties of the prince of Orange, the German military chief Hans Jacob von Castell regarded the castle of Breda as his own possession. Moreover, referring to the Perpetual Edict, the Council of State and the duke of Aarschot refused to return this castle to Orange, as long as the prince would not have lent a new oath of allegiance to the king of Spain. The evacuation of Breda was deferred all the while and the city remained at the mercy of the German garrison. On August 13, 1577, the deficit of Breda had reached 200.000 guilders, while the garrison was still requiring unpaid pays. The prince of Orange decided to besiege the city with the troops of the States. An agreement was concluded with the Germans, by which the latter agreed to leave the city (October 4, 1577), and that same evening Hohenlohe entered Breda at the head of the troops of the States. To pay the pays of the garrison, uniface coins with the value of 2 guilders and 20 stuivers were struck from requisitioned silverware. The coins of 40 stuivers had to weigh a little less than one ounce and those of 20 stuivers a little less than a half ounce.

Campen besieged by the troops of the States General under command of the count of Rennenberg (June 1578- July 20, 1578), 21 stuivers, 1578; Mailliet 22, 3; Delmonte 211; van Gelder 137a. Of the greatest rarity, Very Fine.



(Delmonte 211)

After the Pacification of Ghent, most of the Spanish troops left the Netherlands, but a German garrison, loyal to the king, remained in Campen. In June 1578, the States General ordered the count of Rennenberg to invest the town, and the garrison was forced to evacuate the city on June 20, 1578. In order to meet the requirements of the soldiers, the magistrate decided on May 16, 1578, to strike obsidional coins from the city's silverware, with the value of 38 stuivers and 19 stuivers, but already raised to 42 and 21 stuivers in July 1578, according to the mass of the Burgundian rijksdaalder and half-rijksdaalder.

Deventer besieged by the troops of the States General under command of the count of Rennenberg (August 3, 1578 to November 19, 1578), ¼ daalder of 11 stuiver, 1578; Mailliet -; Delmonte 215; van Gelder 142. Of the greatest rarity, Very Fine.



(Delmonte 215)

After the expulsion of the Spanish garrison from Campen, the count of Rennenberg marched towards Deventer, where another royalist garrison was still maintained. The siege by the army of the States began on August 3, 1578. The garrison surrendered and was granted a free retreat from the city on November 19, 1578. On June 9, 1578, even before siege was started, the silverware of the city was molten and was used by the Mintmaster of the Three Cities, who resided in Deventer, to strike klippenningen, according to the mass and the alloy of the daalders, but put into circulation at a raised rate of 44 stuivers. Half and quarter daalders were struck too, valued at 22 and 11 stuivers.

Brussels invested by the prince of Parma, Alexander Farnese (1579-1580), 18 stuivers, 1580. Mailliet 20, 7; Delmonte 217a; van Gelder 161. Almost Extremely Fine.



(Delmonte 217a)

After the victory of Gembloux over the army of the States commanded by the nobility (January 31, 1578), don Juan occupied part of Brabant and Hainault. Louvain was occupied, while Brussels, Mechlin and Antwerp were threatened. On February 14, 1578, he tried in vain to capture Vilvorde, but Nivelles was taken on March 12. Don Juan died in Namur on October 1, 1578, after having named as his successor the prince of Parma, Alexander Farnese. Parma was the nephew of Philip II and the son of Margaret of Parma, the former governor of the Netherlands. On May 17, 1579, he signed with the Walloon provinces the Peace of Artois, by which the authority of the king was recognized and restored. Farnese captured Maastricht on June 28, 1579. Meanwhile, riots had broken out in Brussels between partisans and opponents of the king of Spain. Philip of Egmont, opposed to the Calvinists and at the head of a regiment of infantry and horsemen, tried to occupy the town hall with the help of the partisans of the Spaniards, but he was driven out by the Calvinists headed by Vandentympele, the commander of the local garrison. Farnese cut off all the connections with the North, but there followed no true siege of Brussels and after a few months the communications were restored. On September 7, 1579, Brussels was granted the right to strike obsidional coins in gold and silver. The rate of the gold coin was fixed at 3 guilders or 60 stuivers, identical to the gold crown, while the silver pieces were issued at the value of the States daalder, which had already raised to the rate of 36 stuivers, while the half-daalder or half-plak was worth 18 stuivers. These coins were struck from September 23, 1579 to June 4, 1580.

Cambrai besieged by the Spaniards (early 1581- August 17, 1581), daalder, 1581; Mailliet 21, 2; Delmonte 218; van Gelder 156. Extremely rare, Very Fine.



(Delmonte 218)

Cambrai was invested by the troops of the prince of Parma early in 1581. When Francis, duke of Alençon, approached at the head of an army of 10.000 men and 4.000 horsemen, the siege was raised (August 17, 1581). During the siege, the governor d'Inchy ordered to strike obsidional daalders made of silver.

Tournai besieged by the prince of Parma (October 5, 1581 to November 30, 1581), 50 stuivers, 1581; Mailliet 112, 7; Delmonte 220; van Gelder 168. Of the greatest rarity, Very Fine.



(Delmonte 220)

Tournai, governed by the Calvinists, was the only Walloon city which sided with the States General against the Spaniards. After the capture of Maastricht and the occupation of the southern part of Brabant, the prince of Parma laid siege to the city on October 5, 1581. Since the governor was absent, the defense was organized by his wife, Philippine de Lalaing, and by François de Divion, lord of Estrelles. Tournai capitulated on November 30, 1581. During the siege the silverware of the citizens was melted down and was transformed into coins of 50, 25 and 12 ½ stuivers. The daalder of 50 stuivers weighed one ounce (30.63 g) and the value was that of the Philip daalder of 1581.

Ypres besieged by the troops of the prince of Parma (August 1583-April 1584), Hungarian ducat, 1526, of Louis II, countermarked with the letter Y. Delmonte 551 (this coin). Comes from the collection Théry, Vinchon sale, Paris, October 23, 1963, and the collection Veldeman, Elsen sale 62, June 24, 2000. Of the greatest rarity, Extremely Fine.



(Delmonte 551, this coin)

Ypres besieged by the troops of the prince of Parma (August 1583-April 1584), daalder of 's Herenberg in the name of Frederic of Berg, countermarked with a gothic uncrowned letter Y within a small framework. Delmonte 223f (this coin); Haeck 748 (this coin). Comes from the collection C. Michiels, Elsen sale 58, June 13, 1998, lot 1943. Of the greatest rarity, Fine to Very Fine, countermark Very Fine.



(Delmonte 223f, this coin)

Aire-sur-Lys, besieged by the French (1641), 8 reales, 1641. Mailliet 1, 1. Comes from the Helbing sale, 1929, lot 1931. Extremely rare, Very Fine.



(Mailliet 1, 1)

Jean Elsen

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