

The Welfs' Splendour in Historic Coins
The Regina Adams Collection at Künker's





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Lösers/Welf Multiple Thalers – A Silver Hymn to the Welf Rulers



Fig. 1: Northern Germany around 1400, excerpt from Ziegelbrenner, HRR 1400. Wikipedia.

Lösers are silver multiple thalers that were minted by the Welf princes (Fig. 1 and 2). In exceptional cases, they could have a value of 25 thalers and then reach a weight of almost 724 g.¹ More common, but also quite rare, were Lösers with a diameter of approximately 100 mm and a weight of 465 g.² Fractions of them were minted in larger quantities: 9, 5, 4, 3, 2½, 2, 1½, 1¼ thalers. The Regina Adams Collection contains multiple thalers worth between 1¼ and 5 thalers. All multiple thalers had the same fineness as the Imperial Thalers, i.e. they were 14 lots and 4 grains fine, or 889/1000.³

The rich silver deposits in the Harz Mountains, to which the Welfs had access, were a prerequisite for the Welf Löser issues. In this respect, all Lösers are in a certain sense “Ausbeute”-Thalers (salvage coins, minted from metal extracted from the ore of a particular mine) and their mere existence was evidence of the Welf princes’ wealth in silver. In some cases, legends and images of these multiple thalers refer directly to the successful mining activities of the Welfs and individual particularly productive mines in the Harz Mountains. Part of the Harz mining zone was common Welf property (so-called “Kommunionharz”).⁴

Duke Julius of Brunswick-Lüneburg from the Wolfenbüttel line (Prince of Wolfenbüttel from 1568-1589) introduced the Löser. He began minting the first multiple thalers in 1574. This is not surprising, as it was under Duke Julius that mining activities, which had already been intensified by his father Heinrich the Younger, reached their first peak.⁵ The last Lösers were minted in 1688 by Ernst August I of Calenberg (Hanover).

The first coins of this type bear the inscription BRVNSWIGS IVLIVS LOSER,⁶ so there can be no doubt about the naming of these coins (Fig. 3). Numismatic research has repeatedly discussed how Duke Julius came up with the name “Juliuslöser”.⁷ All this discussion could have been avoided if more attention had been paid to the publications that emerged a few decades after his death.

They all tell the same story: One of the earliest references to this tradition comes from Barthold Neuhaus/Nihusius (1590-1657), who studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Helmstedt founded by Duke Julius. Neuhaus converted to Catholicism, became a priest, acted as an advisor to the Archbishop of Mainz and died as titular bishop of the former Roman naval base of Misenum. He writes: “At the same time, I must remember that Friedrich Ulrich’s grandfather Julius – when he saw a huge gold coin, called a Portugallöser among the Lower Saxons, and believed that the ‘löser’ was a coin of higher value – said: “So then (this is how the conversation went) we must do something similar and have silver Juliuslösers struck. And so coins were soon produced, some of which were worth several thalers and bore the inscription Juliuslöser”.⁸ Julius, who had introduced the Reformation in his principality, was hated by many Catholics. Neuhaus’ aim was to ridicule Duke Julius by insinuating that he had understood the ‘-losus’ of Portugalosus (= “Portuguese [coin]”) to mean ‘large coin’. In other words, Duke Julius had not realised that ‘Portugalosus’⁹ was a possessive adjective derived from the country’s name – a so-called *ktetikón*. Protestant authors defended Duke Julius against this accusation by telling the story of the duke’s



Fig. 2: Overview of the Welf territories, JN.



Fig. 3: Juliuslöser for 10 thalers from 1574, Künker 346, 28.1.2021, lot 99.

- ¹ Cf. Balan 1993, 117; Mehl 2015.
- ² Duve 1966, 36 (Duke Julius); *ibid.* 66 (Friedrich Ulrich).
- ³ Bahrfeldt 1912, 250.
- ⁴ Cf. the map in Ließmann 1992, 16.
- ⁵ Well summarised by Köhler 1729, 396.
- ⁶ Welter 1971, 90 no. 547.
- ⁷ Leschhorn 2010, 135: „Under Duke Julius, the minting of large silver pieces worth several times a thaler began in 1574, which gave rise to many discussions about their meaning and purpose. The name ‚Löser‘, which these coins had borne from time immemorial, also gave rise to many explanations“.
- ⁸ Nihusius 1648, 224: „& simul memor fio, Friderici Ulrici avum Julium, quum vidisset numum ingentem aureum, vocitatum Saxonibus inferis Portugalöser / atque illo löser significari grandioris monetam pretii putaret, dixisse: Als nemlich (hoc enim ejus diverbium erat,) Wir müssen dergleichen thun / und silberne Juliuslöser schlagen lassen / (Nimirum nos imitari debemus illud, ac tale numisma argenteum, à nobis Juliuslöser denominatum, cudendum curare,) adeoque confectos mox fuisse numos, plurium Thalerorum æquantes pretium singulos, cum epigraphe, Juliuslöser“.
- ⁹ Its Portuguese name was ‚Portugues‘.

encounter with the Portugalosus, but absolving Duke Julius of this maliciously imputed ignorance of Latin. This is the case, for example, with the critic of princes Philipp Andreas Oldenburger (1620-1678)¹⁰ and the historian and numismatist Ernst Wilhelm Tentzel (1659-1707).¹¹

What is correct about this report is that Duke Julius was inspired by the golden Portuguese 10 Cruzado pieces, known as *Portugues*, when minting his multiple thalers. For the denomination of his new coins – which were intended to resemble a Portugues but were made of silver – he used the Latin and the Germanised forms of the coins' names – Portugalosus/Portugaloser/Portugalöser. From their names he formed the linguistically incorrect but propagandistically more effective 'Iulius Loser'; the correct name would have been 'Iulioser'. LOSER, not Loeser, is to be read on the pieces of the first multiple thaler issue by Duke Julius. It is only on the pieces of the second issue, minted in 1583, that it reads LOESER. This probably reflects a popular linguistic development that called the coins Juliuslöser like the Hamburg Portugalöser. The observation that the multiple thalers have originally been called 'Loser' and not 'Löser' is evidence that Duke Julius did not – as is often read – associate these coins' name with the German verb 'lösen'.

In addition to the above-mentioned textual evidence and the origin of the name, the design of the Iulius Lösers proves

that the Portuguese 10 Cruzado pieces (which were called *Portugues*) and the Hamburg Portugalösers (NACH PORTVGALIS SCHROT UND KORN) minted since 1560 were the model for the Wolfenbüttel Lösers (Fig. 4).¹² Like their coin designs, the Juliuslöser has two concentric inscriptions. However, the direct reference to the Portugues can also be recognised by the fact that Duke Julius placed his coat of arms in these two legend rings on his multiple thalers, just like the Portuguese kings. Like the Portuguese 10 Cruzado pieces, Duke Julius' first multiple thalers had ten times the value of a thaler. However, Duke Julius replaced the cross of the Order of Christ on the Portugues coins and the Hamburg Portugalösers¹³ with his portrait to emphasise that his multiple thalers bear his name. All three coins – the Portugues, the Hamburg Portugalöser and the Iulius Löser – are display or gift coins and not currency money, if only because of their high value.

In view of this situation, a tradition that emerged soon after the first multiple thalers were minted – recounted in great detail by the Brunswick historian Philipp Julius Rehtmeyer (1678-1742) in his 'Braunschweigisch-Lüneburgische Chronica' – must be regarded as sheer nonsense. According to this account, Duke Julius is said to have minted the Lösers so that they should be bought by his subjects in a fraction corresponding to their wealth. The multiple thalers acquired through state coercion were not allowed to be sold and had to be presented

¹⁰ Constantinus Germ. [1669], 208: «Cum ipsi aliquando / oblatu esse, nummus Portugallicus, dixit: Ad eundem modum conficiemus nummum, qui de nostro nomine dicetur Iulius löser. Existimavit autem aditamentum τὸ löser gratitudinem, quum nil tamen sit nisi terminatio. *When a Portuguese coin was once brought to him, he said: „Let us make a coin in this way to be called Iulius-löser after our name“. However, he considered the addition ‚löser‘ to be a grateful reference because otherwise the term would not even exist.*

¹¹ Tentzel 1692, 796 and 799 f., where he also draws a parallel to the English Henry Nobel: „Und kan seyn / daß er seine Julius-Löser nach Art der Henricus Nobel benennet haben wollen / so zu seiner Zeit im Schwange giengen / und in verschiedenen damahls gedruckten Münz= und Rechen=Büchern allegiret werden. Zum Exempel in Jacob Köbels Rechen=Buche / gedruckt zu Franckfurt an. 1549. da unter andern Abrissen auch ein Henricus=Nobel zusehen / dessen Gewicht 5. Pfenning 10 Green; Der halbe Henrichs=Nobel 2. Pfenning 17. Green. Das Viertheil oder Ort davon 1. Pfenning 9. Green. Sie waren aber nichts anders / als Engländische güldene Müntzen / nach Art der gantzen und halben Rosenobel / auff einer Seite saß König Henricus in einem Schiffe / auff der andern war eine Rose / mit der Umschrift: Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat. Diese Art Müntze haben nach auch die Nieder=Länder gepräget / wie mir denn selbst einige / die im vorigen Sæculo im Gelder=Lande und Ober Yßel geschlagen wurden / zu Gesichte kommen / und werden noch ietzo Schiffs=Nobel genennet. Wie ich nun ohne raillerie sage Henricus=Nobel und Schiffs=Nobel / die andere Helffte des Worts Rosenobel (Rosa nobilis) anhängend / also

kan ich auch ohne raillerie sagen Julius-Löser / die andere Helffte des Wortes Portugalöser anhängend.“ And it may be / that he wanted to have his Juliuslösers named after the Henricus Nobel / which were in vogue in his time / and are allegorised in various coin and arithmetic books printed at that time. For example in Jacob Köbel's Rechen=Buche / printed at Frankfurt an. 1549. where, among other copies, a Henricus Nobel can be seen / whose weight is 5 Pfenning 10 Green; the half Henrichs Nobel 2 Pfenning 17 Green; the quarter or ort of it 1 Pfenning 9 Green. But they were nothing other than English golden coins / in the manner of the whole and half rose nobles / on one side King Henricus sat in a ship / on the other was a rose / with the inscription: Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat. This kind of coin was also minted in the Low Countries / as I myself have seen some / which were struck in the previous century in Gelderland and Ober Yssel / and are still called ship's nobles. Just as I now say Henricus=Nobel and Schiffs=Nobel / adding the other half of the word Rosenobel (Rosa nobilis) / so I can also say Julius-Löser / adding the other half of the word Portugalöser / without using a raillerie“.

¹² This was already correctly recognised by Balan 1993, 121. He correctly emphasises that the Hamburg Portugaleser were also a starting point for Duke Julius' iconographic imitation.

¹³ However, the Hamburgers had decided to use this cross, but replaced the inscription IN HOC SIGNO VINCES/ *In this sign you will win* with IN XP(ist)O CRVCIFIXO PENDIT SALVS N(ost)RA/ *Our salvation depends on the crucified Christ.*



Fig. 4: Portugallöser of the city of Hamburg (1578-1582),
Künker 230, 14.3.2013, lot 7394.

annually. In this way, a silver reserve was to be built up in the Principality of Wolfenbüttel. If Duke Julius needed silver in emergency situations, these coins would have had to be handed over to the sovereign.¹⁴ The mere consideration of how the silver scattered throughout the country should flow back to the ducal treasury in emergencies proves this construct to be completely unworthy of such a practical-minded duke as Julius was. Bernd Kluge is absolutely right when, following Ernst-Henri Balan's argument, he concludes: "The construct described by Rehtmeyer, however, seems far too fantastic to have ever worked in practice".¹⁵

The assumption that the multiple thalers, especially those of Duke Julius, would have had a monetary function is contradicted above all by the small number of multiple thalers issued, which made them extremely rare collector's coins even during the duke's lifetime and even more so soon afterwards.¹⁶ If Löser had had the function described by Rehtmeyer, many of them would have been minted to create a larger financial cushion and more of them would therefore be preserved today.

The fact that Franz Algermann, a contemporary and 'landfiscal'/ revenue officer of Duke Julius, made no mention of the Lösers in his biography of Duke Julius – written in 1598 and revised in 1608¹⁷ – speaks against the use of multiple thalers as described by Rehtmeyer. The biographer would certainly have mentioned such an unusual and attention attracting action in his biography. The Welf multiple thalers were not issued for a special action to secure the finances of the duchy, but were gift coins, as was customary in princely circles. They were therefore not worth mentioning to Algermann.

The production of such large and prestigious coins, for which rolling mills had to be used,¹⁸ does not fit in with the rather banal financial policy objective mentioned by Rehtmeyer. Instead of such, which were difficult and expensive to produce, one could have used simple thalers in various quantities for such a purpose.

The fact that the currency custodians of the Lower Saxony imperial district, the Kreiswardeine, did not deal with the Welf multiple thalers at all during the Probation Days and therefore make no mention of them in their records¹⁹ speaks against any function of the Lösers as larger value money.

The observation that the embossed nominal weights were often incorrect, especially in the first year of issue, can be explained by the fact that they were not minted for circulation but for gift purposes: There was no payment or value function, at least not primarily. Some of the multiple thalers even lacked any value mark. If they had been savings coins, as described by Rehtmeyer, they would have had to be very precisely marked.²⁰

Just as the neighbouring proud city of Hamburg made its wealth, acquired through trade, visible with golden Portugalösers, the Welf principality of Wolfenbüttel wanted to highlight its wealth by means of a Welf multiple thaler coinage. In this respect, the objective of the Juliuslösers corresponded to the intentions of the Portuguese kings, who had Portuguese coins minted: "The gold piece thus signified grandeur and power on an unprecedented scale and was created to represent an enterprise and a people."²¹ The art historian and discerning chronicler of Wolfenbüttel, Friedrich Thöne (1907-1975), emphasises the special character of the creator of the Welf multiple thalers: "His grotesque need for recognition, which surpassed the desire for glory of many Renaissance men, was expressed by the fact that he affixed his mark HJ (ligated) countless times to buildings or building components, on documents, on designs – even on cannonballs".²² Thus the Juliuslöser competed with the Portugallöser and outweighed the Hamburgers' African-Portuguese gold with Harz silver.

¹⁴ Rehtmeyer 1722, 1011f.

¹⁵ Kluge 2015, 19.

¹⁶ They were already rare collector's coins in the time of Duke Julius, as can be seen from a letter from his daughter to him, cf. Tewes 1891, 42 f. Cf. already Tentzel 1692, 795: „the Julius multiple thalers are currently counted among the rarest medals / and are paid for in their entirety by enthusiasts for 40 to 50 thlr.“.

¹⁷ This biography was first published in 1823 by the eminent jurist and translator of numerous Latin authors Friedrich Karl von Strombeck.

¹⁸ Bahrfeld 1912, 251.

¹⁹ Fürstenwerth 1976, 63.

²⁰ Bahrfeld 1912, 251: „These are intentional or unintentional accidental slip, perhaps later markings, probably also gimmicks“; Leschhorn 2010, 136.

²¹ Trigueiros 1991, 1732

²² Thöne 1963, 47.

The intention behind the minting of the Löser coins was not only to show the achievements and personality of the Welf princes in a bright light, but also to make it clear through the display of wealth that they had chosen the right faith in the constant religious conflicts of the time and were therefore economically successful by the grace of God. The significance of divine providence for the life of Duke Julius, who had introduced the Reformation to the Principality of Wolfenbüttel, is clearly expressed in the legends on the Julius multiple thaler coins: O HER – BEHVT – MIR – NICHT – MER – DAN – SEEL – LEIB – VNDT – HER/ *O Lord, at least protect my soul, body and honour!* and GOTTES – VERSEHEN – MVS – GESCHEHEN/*God's intentions must come to pass* (Fig. 3). The ability to mint such precious coins was seen as proof that God's blessing rested on the Duke.

Julius' Welf successors continued to mint Löser. Even though the term 'Löser' no longer appeared on coins, it nevertheless became commonplace for the Welf multiple thalers. It is no longer assumed that the multiple thaler coinages produced by the successors of Duke Julius pursued financial policy objectives. It is undisputed that the Löser are 'presentation coins/Schaumünzen' that celebrate e.g. homages, birthdays, political successes and major mining yields, but also commemorate the death and pompous funerals of princes at which they were distributed. The large number of fractions shows that hierarchical aspects as well as varying degrees of merit played a role in the awarding of the pieces. The social

hierarchy was underpinned and reinforced by the gifting of different sized pieces of Löser. The high denominations were predominantly intended for members of the same social class. At the same time, achievements could be rewarded according to commitment and merit.

The Welf multiple thalers were a silver hymn of the Welf dukes to their own achievements and the importance of their principalities, radiating self-confidence and accentuating the nobles' manifold identities. The silver wealth of the Harz made it possible for the princes to display their wealth, to associate themselves with silver lustre and the jingle of coins and thus to present themselves to their peers and subjects as powerful and successful rulers. With rich gifts, they were able to emphasise their generosity and create a contemporary image and, after their death, a memorial to themselves in the present and future. Thus, the Löser are a metal hymn to the ruling houses of the Welfs that spans more than two centuries. Their coinage was also a unifying element of this fragmented dynasty. Löser were many things: presentation coins, i.e. coins intended to display something, medal-like rewards as well as memorial medals of large and even significant metal value, often works of art of high quality. Today, Löser are above all exceptional pieces of jewellery in any coin collection. Historically, they provide impressive access to many aspects of European history and shed light on the role played in it by one of Europe's oldest noble houses.

The Mint Lords

Introduction: The Welf Princes

It was the rulers of the Welf dynasty who issued Löser/Welf multiple thalers. The Welfs are one of the oldest and most important noble houses in Europe. They were related to the Carolingians and the northern Italian d'Este family. Lines of the house still exist today. In the Middle Ages, the Welfs ruled over Burgundy, Saxony and Bavaria and were so important that they competed with the Hohenstaufen emperors. In 1714, their Hanover (Calenberg) line even won the throne of Great Britain and accompanied its rise to a global empire. The personal union between Hanover and Great Britain ended in 1837, since according to Salian (Salian-Frankish) Law Queen Victoria as a woman was not entitled to inherit the Kingdom of Hanover. Today, the head of the Welf family is Ernst August V, Prince of Hanover and Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg, (born in 1954).

In Northern Germany, Welf noblemen appeared as Dukes of Brunswick and Lüneburg from 1235 to 1918. Their power there was based in particular on their rule over wider parts of the Harz Mountains and its rich ore deposits, as well as on significant salt production. The Welf territory was split up into independent principalities through inheritance divisions. However, these could be reunited if the ruler of a line died childless. The most significant Welf principalities were Wolfenbüttel, Lüneburg, Göttingen, Grubenhagen and Calenberg. In 1692, the Principalities of Calenberg, Göttingen and Grubenhagen became the Electorate of Hanover; Lüneburg was integrated later. Following the brief incorporation of the Welf possessions into the Kingdom of Westphalia, which was ruled by Napoleon's brother Jérôme from 1807 to 1813, the Duchy of Brunswick and the Kingdom of Hanover emerged from the Congress of Vienna in 1814. The Kingdom of Hanover was annexed by Prussia in 1866; the Duchy of Brunswick continued to exist until 1918.



Fig. 5: Portrait of Heinrich Julius in the Atrium Heroicum of Dominicus Custos.

The 'Regina Adams Collection' includes Welf multiple thalers from the Principality of Wolfenbüttel (Heinrich Julius, Friedrich Ulrich, August the Younger, Rudolf August), the Principality of Lüneburg (Friedrich IV) and the Principality of Calenberg (the brothers Christian Ludwig, Johann Friedrich and Ernst August I).

Heinrich Julius, Prince of Wolfenbüttel (1589-1613): A Cultivated Prince at the imperial court in Prague

Hilda Lietzmann, a historian with a wide range of interests, has described the person and significance of Duke Heinrich Julius as follows: "The Duke, who died after a short and severe illness at the age of only 48, was a prince of courageous and fearless vigour who had done great service to the Emperor and the empire. Hardly any of the peers of his time had been able to match his erudition – especially in the field of jurisprudence – his stage plays, but also his astonishing originality".²³ His astute



Fig. 6: Main building of the University of Helmstedt, Times, Wikipedia.

eye and his characteristic energy are captured in the portrait that Dominicus Custos (1560-1612), who worked at the court of Rudolf II in Prague, included in his 'Atrium heroicum' (Fig. 5).²⁴ It is based on a 1598 painting by Hans von Aachen, who worked at the Prague court of Rudolf II; the painting has since been lost. There is no doubt that Heinrich Julius was one of the most important Welf princes. He is the Welf duke who ruled the largest territory after Heinrich der Löwe/Henry the Lion.

Heinrich Julius was born in 1564 as the eldest son of Duke Julius (1568-1589). Julius ensured that his son received an extremely good education in ancient languages, theology and law. In 1576, at the age of 12, Heinrich Julius received a lifetime appointment as Rector of the University of Helmstedt (Fig. 6), which had been founded by his father. In 1578, he became bishop-administrator (episcopus postulatus) of the diocese of Halberstadt, but the Pope refused to confirm his appointment. In 1582, Heinrich Julius also gained the dignity of a bishop-administrator of the diocese of Minden. In 1585, he married Dorothea of Saxony, but she died in childbirth just two years later.

²³ Lietzmann 1993, 7.

²⁴ Custos 1600.



Fig. 7: Presumed burial place of Michael Praetorius in Sanctae Mariae Virginis, JN.

When Duke Julius died in 1589, Heinrich Julius took over the principality of Wolfenbüttel. In 1590 he married Elisabeth, a sister of the Danish King Christian IV. Julius spent a great deal of money on the arts, lavishly spreading the money around which his father had saved. Duke Heinrich Julius expanded the Wolfenbüttel palace and began building the city's main church Beatae Mariae Virginis, which has since served as the burial church for the princes of Wolfenbüttel.²⁵ He turned Wolfenbüttel into one of the strongest fortresses in northern Germany. He was a great lover of the theatre and wrote a number of plays himself. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) worked at his court as court conductor, and is still known worldwide for his version of the famous Christmas carol *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming/Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* (Fig. 7).

Witch burnings and expulsions of Jews took place on a large scale during his reign. The German-Jewish, later British writer Richard Friedenthal (1896-1979) associated this with a phenomenon of the Early Modern Period: "It is a decisive feature of the Duke's character and of his era, which represents a watershed between the ages, that traits of striking modernity clash abruptly with those of the declining past, the Middle Ages".²⁶

In the ongoing dispute between the Welf princes and the city of Brunswick, which was striving for imperial immediacy, Duke Heinrich Julius suffered a defeat in 1605; he failed to capture the rich and well-fortified city. As a result, he turned his back on Wolfenbüttel and his duchy and from 1607 spent more time at the imperial court of Rudolf II in Prague, where he resided permanently from 1610 to his death. There, he became an important advisor to the Emperor, and in that role he was able to prevent Brunswick from becoming a free imperial city. The close connection between Duke Heinrich Julius and Emperor Rudolf II is still commemorated today by the large blue sapphire at the top of the Austrian imperial crown, which is also known as the Rudolf Crown (Fig. 8) after its patron: It was a gift from the Duke of Wolfenbüttel to the Emperor.²⁷

Friedrich Ulrich, Prince of Wolfenbüttel (1613-1634): Suffering from Misfortune or Creating it?

Heinrich Julius' son Friedrich Ulrich (Fig. 9) assumed the rule of the Principality of Brunswick Wolfenbüttel in 1613 at the age of 22. It is difficult to say whether Friedrich Ulrich was the most unfortunate or the most incompetent prince of the Wolfenbüttel Welfs. He may have been both, but in any case he did everything he could to exacerbate crisis situations.



Fig. 8: Rudolf's crown.



Fig. 9: Löser for 4 thalers: Friedrich Ulrich on horseback. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1542, Estimate: 3,000 euros.

He inherited a debt of 1.2 million thalers from his father and his unfortunate military conflict with Brunswick in 1614/15 increased the mountain of debt even more. When he allowed his counsellor Anton von Streitberg and four other noblemen to govern between 1616 and 1622, this so-called "Landdrostenregiment" corrupted the administration of justice and profitably manipulated the principality's coins (so-called Kipper and Wipper acts), which resulted in devastating inflation and ruined the principality financially.

The Principality of Wolfenbüttel lost large parts of its territory under Friedrich Ulrich. In 1617, the Imperial Court Council decided that Friedrich Ulrich was required to hand over the Principality of Grubenhagen to the Celle line. In 1627, he lost the counties of Hohnstein and Regenstein to his creditors. In 1629, the Imperial Chamber Court ordered him to return the Hildesheim territories he had won in the 1523 Hildesheim Diocesan Feud to the Bishop of Hildesheim.

In the difficult times of the Thirty Years' War, which broke out in 1618, Friedrich Ulrich was unable to find a coherent strategy and changed sides several times. As he had refused to be elected as Colonel of the Lower Saxony Imperial Circle, King Christian IV of Denmark was able to take this office. The Danes captured the fortress of Wolfenbüttel before imperial troops drove them out in 1627. However, Friedrich Ulrich succeeded in preventing the imperial commanders Pappenheim, Tilly and Wallenstein from taking possession of the Wolfenbüttel principality. In an alliance with Sweden, Friedrich Ulrich managed to improve the military situation before his death, but the ruling line of the House of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel

ended with him. His marriage to Anna Sophia of Brandenburg in 1614 had quickly broken down to such an extent that she had left the court. Friedrich Ulrich therefore died without natural heirs, so that the Wolfenbüttel line died out and its property passed to the Lüneburg Welf line.

**Duke August II 'the Younger',
Prince of Wolfenbüttel (1645-1666):
The Duchy's Saviour after the Thirty Years' War,
a Fighter for German Language and Library Founder**

August II is a good example of how an unexpected inheritance can completely change the life of an intellectual and book collector.

Duke Augustus II 'the Younger' of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Wolfenbüttel line, unexpectedly became one of the most important Welf princes. Born in 1579, he was the seventh child of Duke Heinrich von Dannenberg from the line of the Celle Welfs. This late birth meant that he had no prospect of a significant regency. He therefore had the opportunity to study in Rostock, Tübingen and Strasbourg, where he learnt Latin, Greek, Italian, French and English. He was able to make practical use of his language skills on his "grand tour" through Italy, Sicily, Malta, France, Holland and England. When he returned home in 1605, he settled in Hitzacker, where he had a limited residence built, which formed the centre of a small manor. Despite his modest income, he turned to collecting books and clocks, which were expensive at the time, and built a library in his palace at Hitzacker, which he affectionately called "Nova Ithaca" in a reference to the rural estate of Homer's Odysseus. He wrote books on chess and secret writing and attempted a new translation of the Bible into German. In 1632, he was accepted into the intellectual 'Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft' ('fruitful society') founded by Prince Ludwig von Anhalt-Köthen and was particularly active as a promoter of the German language.

²⁵ Cf. Helm 2015.

²⁶ Friedenthal 1996, 24.

²⁷ Lietzmann 1993, 27.



Fig. 10: Löser for 1½ thalers: August the Younger. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1550, Estimate: 2.500 euros.

When the Wolfenbüttel line (Middle House of Brunswick) died out with the death of the unfortunate Friedrich Ulrich in 1634, August II (Fig. 10) became his successor in 1635 after a lengthy inheritance dispute. However, due to the ongoing Thirty Years' War, the then 56-year-old heir had to spend another nine years at Dankwarderode in Brunswick before he was able to move to Wolfenbüttel in 1643, and then into its badly-damaged residence (Fig. 11) in 1644. He was 64 years old at that time.

With his large collection of books, he founded the Wolfenbüttel Bibliotheca Augusta, which he was able to massively expand during his reign thanks to greater revenues. At his death, it comprised 40,000 volumes. It was described by contemporaries as the 'Eighth Wonder of the World'. Under Duke August, Wolfenbüttel became a European cultural centre. His court was associated with scholars such as Justus Georg Schottelius, the 'father of German grammar' and Heinrich Schütz as chief conductor.

Despite generous expenditures for cultural purposes, he succeeded in restoring the principality, which had suffered badly in the Thirty Years' War, to a good economic status through prudent financial management, a fairly modest lifestyle and increased profits from the Harz mining industry.

He issued numerous decrees aimed at improving the lives of his subjects. Among other things, he introduced compulsory education in 1647.

It was therefore a well-deserved tribute that the citizens of Wolfenbüttel paid him when they inaugurated the Duke August Fountain (Fig. 12) on their market square in 1904. It shows the Duke giving his horse a rest after a ride through his war-ravaged country and allowing it to drink from a spring. This is no pompous equestrian representation, but rather that of a prince who loved people and animals. Perhaps the horse that Duke August is leading by its reins can also be associated with the heraldic animal of the Welf principalities, the Saxon steed

He left four sons, the first of whom died as a child, Rudolph August and Anton Ulrich became his successors in the rule of the principality of Wolfenbüttel and Ferdinand Albrecht was compensated with the rule of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel-Bevern.

**Rudolph August,
Prince of Wolfenbüttel (1666-1704):
The Conqueror of Brunswick**

Duke Rudolph August (born 1627) took over the ruler after the death of his father August the Younger in 1666 (Fig. 13). There was a simmering conflict between him and his brother Anton Ulrich, as August the Younger's will, according to which the regency was to be divided between the two brothers, had disappeared. In the end, Rudolf August was able to assert his sole rule. To resolve the tensions, he appointed his brother Governor in 1667 and co-regent in 1685. A crisis arose in 1702 when Anton Ulrich, angered by the awarding of the electoral dignity to the Welf House of Calenberg (Hanover), sided with Louis XIV. of France. Rudolf August was forced to distance himself from Anton Ulrich due to massive pressure from the other two Welf dukes and the Emperor. However, this did not prevent Anton Ulrich from taking over the principality of Wolfenbüttel after his brother's death in 1704.



Fig. 11: Wolfenbüttel Palace, JN.



Fig. 12: The Duke August Fountain on the market square in Wolfenbüttel, JN.

Rudolf August's great passions were hunting – which is why his father had given him the office of a Master of the Huntsmen in 1663 – and theology. He was involved in the writing of pietistic psalm hymnals. Friedrich Thöne says of him: “He and one of his successors, Ferdinand Albrecht II (1735), were exceptions among the rulers of the Welf dynasty in Wolfenbüttel in that they contributed nothing to culture”.²⁸

In 1650, he married the 16-year-old Christiane Elisabeth von Barby, who bore him four children. However, his son died before he reached the age of one. After Christiane Elisabeth's death, he married the daughter of a barber and surgeon, Rosine Elisabeth Menthe, who had been his late wife's chambermaid, in a 'morganatic' marriage. This marriage produced no children, so that after his death in 1704, his younger brother Anton Ulrich took over the principality of Wolfenbüttel.

In 1671, Rudolf August succeeded in subduing the city of Brunswick with the support of other Welf dukes. Both the economic decline and internal conflicts among the citizens of Brunswick as well as the military armament and unusual concord of the Welf dukes had made this successful strike against the city possible. Over the centuries, Brunswick had attempted to preserve its urban privileges and prevent its incorporation into the territory of the Welfs. Brunswick was transferred from the joint possession of the Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg to the Princes of Wolfenbüttel. This marked the beginning of Wolfenbüttel's loss of importance. At the end, the dukes moved to Brunswick: In 1753, it became the Welf residence city, as it had been in the time of Henry the Lion.



Fig. 13: Löser for 3 thalers: Rudolf August's conquest of Brunswick. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1552, Estimate: 10,000 euros.

²⁸ Thöne 1963, 107.



Fig. 14: Friedrich IV, property of the Royal House of Hanover, auctioned at Sotheby's on 5 October 2005, Wikipedia.



Fig. 15: Christian Ludwig on a Welf horse (Matthäus Merian c. 1660, residence in Celle, Wikipedia)



Fig. 16: Johann Friedrich (Unknown painter, c. 1670, residence in Celle)

Friedrich IV, Prince of Lüneburg (1636-1648): The Peace-loving Duke

When Friedrich IV (1574-1648) – the fourth eldest son of Duke William the Younger – took over the regency of Lüneburg-Celle and Grubenhagen in 1636 at the age of 62 (Fig. 14), the Thirty Years' War was entering its fourth and final period. France and Sweden attempted to assert their interests at the expense of the Empire. Friedrich IV was a convinced pacifist, which was reflected in his motto FRIED ERNEHRD, UNFRIED VERZEHRD/ *Peace feeds, discord consumes* on his coinage. He concluded a separate peace treaty with Emperor Ferdinand III at Goslar in 1642, which was unfavourable for the Welfs. However, his peace-loving attitude and war-weariness led to a massive abandonment of Welf claims and interests, as well as to a demilitarisation, which created a poor starting position for the Welfs in the peace negotiations at Osnabrück and Münster. He was still fortunate enough to witness the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia, but died just a few weeks later. He was buried in the princely crypt in Celle.

Christian Ludwig, Prince of Lüneburg (1648-1665): The Alcohol-addicted Husband of an Energetic Wife

Christian Ludwig (1622-1658) took over the reign of the Principality of Calenberg in 1641 (Fig. 15) when his father Georg – a famous general in the Thirty Years' War – died. In 1648, after the death of his uncle Friedrich IV, he inherited the rule of the Principality of Lüneburg and left the reign of Calenberg to his younger brother Georg.

In 1642 he was admitted to the 'Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft'. In 1653 he married Dorothee, Princess of Holstein-Glücksburg. The marriage between Christian Ludwig, who was prone to drinking and irascibility, and Dorothee remained childless. 10

years after Christian Ludwig's death in 1668 Dorothee married the Great Elector, Friedrich William of Brandenburg-Prussia. This marriage produced seven children. The self-confident and energetic woman was later associated with various intrigues. Christian Ludwig did not live to see any of this, as he died relatively young at the age of 43 and was buried in the princely crypt of St Mary's in Celle.

Johann Friedrich, Prince of Calenberg, Grubenhagen and Göttingen (1665-1679): The Will to Absolutist Rule

With the death of Christian Ludwig, rule over Lüneburg was to pass to his next eldest brother Georg Wilhelm. Nevertheless, Johann Friedrich attempted to gain control of the Principality of Lüneburg for himself. Georg Wilhelm finally asserted his right of succession and Johann Friedrich thus had to be content with the Principality of Calenberg, which Georg Wilhelm had held until then. As compensation, Georg Wilhelm left his brother Johann Friedrich the Welf principalities of Grubenhagen and Göttingen in addition to Calenberg.

Johann Friedrich turned out to be an absolutist baroque prince (Fig. 16) who massively reduced the traditional power of the estates in his duchy. In 1651, he converted to Catholicism in Assisi on his "grand tour", which took him through France and Italy. The Franciscan monk Giuseppe da Copertino – a popular saint and miracle worker, as Padre Pio was to become in the 20th century – had been able to persuade him to do so.

Johann Friedrich settled into his initially only reluctantly acquired principality of Calenberg and in 1666 began to develop Herrenhausen Palace into a magnificent summer residence with extensive gardens. In 1676, he appointed the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz to his court historiographer and librarian and began to build up a library.



Fig. 18: Herrenhausen Palace, Raycer, Wikipedia

Fig. 17:
Löser for 3 thalers:
Ernst August I.
Künker Auction Sale 412,
The Regina Adams Collec-
tion.
Lot 1565, Estimate: 10,000 euros.

After Johann Friedrich died in Augsburg on his way to Italy in 1679, he was buried in the church of Leineschloss after a grandiose funeral procession. The reign was inherited by his youngest brother Ernst August.

Ernst August I, Bishop of Osnabrück, Prince of Calenberg, and Elector of Hanover (1662-1698): A Skilful Prince with Good Fortune

Ernst August I (1629-1698) was the youngest son of Duke Georg, Prince of Calenberg. Unlike his brothers Christoph Ludwig, Georg Wilhelm and Johann Friedrich, he was initially not so fortunate as to win a Welf principality. He therefore had to content himself with becoming prince-bishop of the Osnabrück episcopal see at first, an office which he held from 1662 until his death.

In 1658, he married Sophie of the Palatinate – the daughter of the Elector Palatine Friedrich V (1596-1632) and Elizabeth Stuart, who herself was the daughter of King James VI of Scotland resp. James I of England and Ireland and the granddaughter of the beheaded Mary Stuart. Friedrich V had entered history as the “Winter King” and was forced to lead an unsettled wandering life with his family after losing the Battle of the White Mountain near Prague in 1620. Ernst August’s marriage to Sophie was to steer the history of the Welf dynasty in unexpected directions.

As Bishop of Osnabrück, Ernst August began building a prestigious palace in 1667, which today serves as the administrative headquarters of the University of Osnabrück. His children Georg Ludwig (later King George I of Great Britain), Ernst August II (Governor of his royal brother in Hanover and Bishop of Osnabrück) and Sophie Charlotte (Queen of Prussia after 1701 and namesake of Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin) were born there.

When Ernst August’s brother Johann Friedrich, Prince of Calenberg, died in 1679, Ernst August was able to take over the Principality of Calenberg (Hanover) (Fig. 17). In 1683, he introduced primogeniture in order to protect his newly acquired principality from fragmentation through succession. Ernst August’s younger sons rebelled against this, as they could not then count on being provided for by a regency. Three of them lost their lives in imperial service – in the Great Turkish War (1683-1699) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1774). Like his brother Johann Friedrich, Ernst August employed the philosopher and mathematician Leibniz as court librarian and as an adviser on gardening matters (Fig. 18).

In 1692, Ernst August succeeded in having his principality of Calenberg elevated to the status Electorate of Hanover and he was given the newly created arch office of Imperial Standard Bearer. He had bought this elevation of his principality with massive financial support to Emperor Leopold I (1658-1705) in the wars against the Turks.

As he died in 1698, he did not live to see the English Parliament appoint his wife, the Stuart Princess Sophie, as heir to the English throne in 1701 with the Act of Settlement. However, she died in 1714, two months before Queen Anne (1702-1714). Since none of Anne’s children reached adulthood and she had no natural heir, the eldest son of Ernst August and Sophie of the Palatinate, Georg Ludwig, became King of Great Britain and Elector of Hanover.

The Inscriptions on the Löser

Between Latin and German

The inscriptions of the Löser reflect a transitional period: In addition to the traditional use of Latin, German was repeatedly used for the title and motto of a ruler. There are various reasons for the emergence of German. Firstly, the translation of the Bible into early New High German by Martin Luther (from 1522 to 1545) greatly emancipated the German language from Latin in all social classes and cultural institutions. German regained the character that the term *Deutsch* (*thiutisc/volkssprachlich*, derived from Old High German *thiot/people*) already expressed when it was coined: it was the vernacular language of the German population and began to increasingly replace Latin, even among the educated classes. In the Protestant territories, it also replaced Latin because Latin was regarded as the language of the Catholic Church. Duke Julius used it on his first multiple thalers for the invocations to God and for the description of his new and unusual coin. He formulated the motto of his reign in Latin.

Therefore it is not surprising that both Duke Julius' son and grandson – Heinrich Julius and Friedrich Ulrich – used Latin for their titles and reigning mottoes in the old educational tradition.

Duke August the Younger was a strong advocate of the use of the German language and also used it on the multiple thalers. On many of these coins, his motto appears in German: ALLES MIT BEDACHT ("Everything With Consideration"). The famous baroque writer Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (1607-1658) dedicated a booklet to Duke August in which he proposed the erection of a monument to him. The Duke was to receive a statue showing him riding Pegasus, the horse of the muses. In the inscription on the pedestal, the Duke is described as a 'strict protector of the native language' (Fig. 20).²⁹ In addition to the short and concise German version of the Duke's motto, it was also rendered in a Latin hexameter (which is a chronostichon; see below). The rendering of Duke August's motto in a mixture of Latin and Italian is somewhat curious: EXPENDE PRIMA PENZA, POI [<S>] FA/Weigh up your first thoughts, then you should act (Fig. 19). The memories of the Duke's two-year stay in Italy during his 'grand tour' were evidently reflected in the second part of the motto.

Duke Augustus used the Latin TANDEM/In the end, indeed! as a cry of relief when the Emperor confirmed his assumption of power over Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel.



Fig. 19: Löser for 5 thalers: Duke August's motto in a strange mixture of Latin and Italian. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1544, Estimate: 40,000 euros.

²⁹ Harsdörffer 1646, between 4 and 5: Duci | Brunswicensi & Lune|burgensi, | Augusto, | pio, forti, felici, | verae virtutis & | quietis | assertori insigni, | linguae patriae vin|dici | strenuo.



Fig. 20: G.Ph. Harsdörffer, Porticus Augusti, Nürnberg 1646: Duke August riding the Pegasus, the horse of the Muses, as patron of the arts

The increased use and dissemination of the German language was one of the aims of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft, which was founded by Prince Ludwig I von Anhalt Köthen in Weimar in 1617 and to which Duke August was personally admitted by the founder in 1632: "On the other hand, it shall also be incumbent on the members above all / to learn and practise our highly honoured mother tongue / in its thorough essence and right understanding / without interference from foreign filler words / whether in speech / writing / reports / in the most ornamental and clearest way". Throughout his life, August the Younger campaigned for the spread of the German language and brought Justus Georg Schottel/Schottelius (1612-1676) to his court as the tutor (praeceptor) of his children. As the author of the first fundamental grammar of the German language, Schottel called for the fixation and poetic upgrading of the German language.

The Welf dukes after Augustus the Younger again used Latin more frequently on the multiple thalers – not least because their increasingly striving for absolutism was not conducive to a cultural orientation towards the people.

The Dukes' Titles

The legitimisation of ducal power is, as the inscriptions in Latin and German unequivocally express, divine investiture. It is formulated as 'Dei Gratia' or 'By the grace of God'. This divine grace had already been called into question in the cities with their civil constitutions since the High Middle Ages and in the Peace of Osnabrück and Münster with the definitive recognition of the Dutch States General. Although the Enlightenment and the French Revolution marked a massive weakening of the doctrine of rulers' divine right, that doctrine has been preserved in some monarchies, such as England, right up to the present day.

All Welf dukes, regardless of which line they come from, bear the title of 'Dux Brunsvicensis et Luneburgensis/Herzog zu Brunswyk/Braunsueig und Lüneburg'.

In the coin inscriptions, they did not mention the line from which they came and which gave an indication of the

territory they actually ruled. Otherwise, the administration of ecclesiastical principalities was mentioned more frequently, such as the position of a POSTVL(atus) EPISCOP(us) HALBE(rstadtensis) – i.e. a bishop elected by the cathedral chapter but not confirmed by the Pope – in the case of Heinrich Julius, a coadjutor of the episcopal principality Ratzeburg and a provost of the archbishopric of Bremen in the case of Friedrich IV, and a bishop of Osnabrück in the case of Ernst August I.

The Germanisation of titles resulted in unusual and inconsistently abbreviated legends, for example on the multiple thalers of Friedrich IV. von Celle: V(on) G(ottes) G(naden) FRIDERICH HERTZOG ZU BRAUNS(ueig) U(nd) LUNE(burg) COAD(iutor) D(es) ST(iftes) RA(tzeburg), D(om)P(ropst des) E(rz)ST(iftes) BREM(en) (Abb. 21).

On the multiple thalers of the three brothers – Christian Ludwig, Johann Friedrich and Ernst August



*Fig. 21: Löser for 4 thalers:
The titulature of Frederick IV of Celle
Künker Auction Sale 412,
The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1556, Estimate: 15,000 euros.*

– the name of the regent is only represented by a monogram, crowned by a ducal hat, surrounded by a laurel wreath and the coats of arms of the ruled territories. The respective duke's motto and the date of the Löser/multiple thaler can be read in the inscription.

On the multiple thalers Lüneburg's name appears sometimes as Luneburg, sometimes as Lunaburg. The latter connects the town's name with the Latin goddess of the moon, Luna. The Roman conqueror and politician Julius Caesar is said to have built the town on his march to the river Elbe and dedicated it to the moon goddess; the humanists therefore also called Lüneburg Selenopolis (Greek Σελήνη/Selänä). Duke August, who came from a branch of the Lüneburg princes, wrote some books under the pseudonym Gustavus Selenus.³¹



Fig 22: The town hall of Celle, in front of it the Luna Fountain, Irene Alff, Wikipedia

Charlemagne or the missionary bishop Egistius are said to have destroyed the image of the pagan goddess Luna.³² Although invented late, this legend associates the town with famous personalities and alludes to the city's great age. For this reason, the Luna Fountain with a statue of Luna (or Artemis, who was also regarded as the goddess of the moon) was erected on Lüneburg's market square in 1532 (Fig. 22 and 23); a crescent moon appears in the upper coat of arms. In reality, Lüneburg's city name goes back to Old High German *Hliuni* = place of refuge.

The Dukes' Mottos Displayed on Multiple Thalers

On the Welf multiple thalers usually the dukes' personal mottoes are displayed. In some cases they are linked to an emblem (allegorical illustration). These mottoes are important as they are intended to express the dukes' political objectives and personal moral attitudes to their office. In contrast to armorial slogans and the ducal titles, these mottoes were chosen by the ruler himself – they were individual, even if several dukes had the same motto – and they fell into disuse on his death. As a rule, they were not changed even during long reigns.³³ The significance of aristocratic mottoes was greatly increased by their use at the court of Versailles under Louis XIV.³⁴

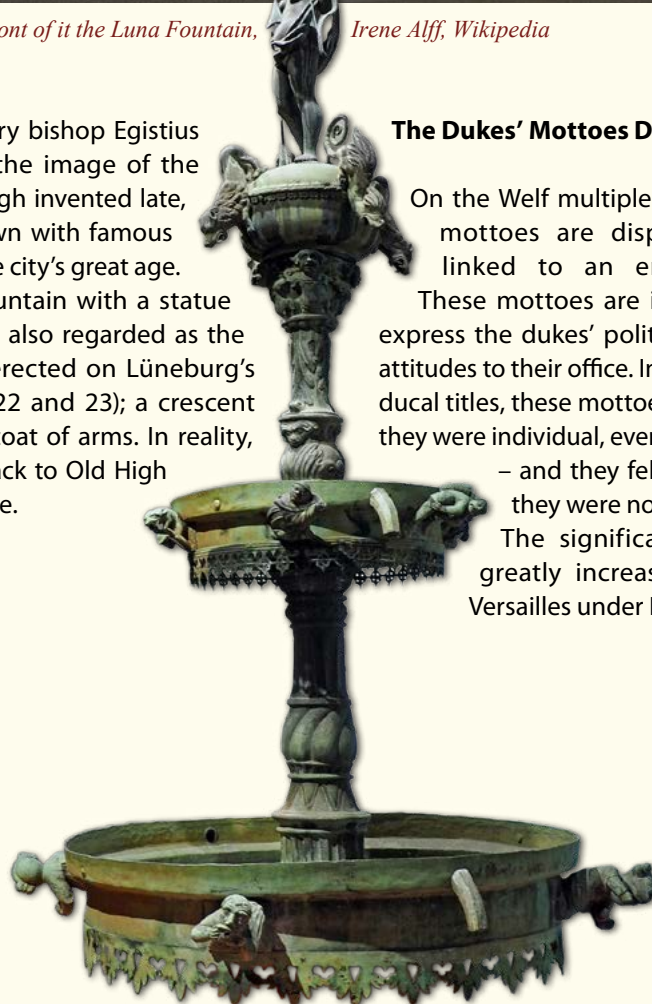


Fig. 23: The Luna Fountain, Hajotthu, Wikipedia

³⁰ Neumark 1668, 26.

³¹ Raabe 1979, 157.

³² Volger 1872, 1 f. Cf. Reinecke 1933, 3 f.

³³ Cf. Schenk zu Schweinsberg 1954

³⁴ Wrede 2005, 291-293.



*Fig. 24: Löser for 5 thalers: Heinrich Julius' motto.
Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1540, Estimate: 5,000 euros.*



*Fig. 25: Löser for 5 thalers: Friedrich Ulrich's motto.
Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1541, Estimate: 10,000 euros.*



Fig. 26: Löser for 2 thalers: Motto of August the Younger. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1547, Estimate: 2,500 euros.

Duke Heinrich Julius' motto was HONESTVM PRO PATRIA/ *Doing honourable things for his country* (Fig. 23).

Friedrich Ulrich used the motto

DEO ET PATRIÆ/

For God and my country

(a variant of *Pro Deo et Patria*), which is still frequently used today (Fig. 24).

As a promoter of German language, Duke August, formulated his motto in German: ALLES MIT BEDACHT/ *Everything with consideration!* (Reg 23), but also used it in a mixture of Latin and Italian: EXPENDE PRIMA PENSA, POI [<S>I]³⁵ FA/ *Consider the first tasks, then act/then one should act* (Fig. 22). The use of Italian is a reminiscence of his almost two-year stay in Italy during his Grand Tour.³⁶ August's motto appears on his burial multiple thalers in a Latin hexameter, which is used for a chronogram: OMNIA NON NISI PROVIDO ET VEGETO CONSILIO/ *Do everything with foresight and a lively plan!* (Fig. 26).

His pietist son Rudolph August decided for the motto REMIGIO ALTISSIMI/ *When the highest holds the helm*. The importance of this motto was emphasised by the court preacher Johannes Niekamp in his sermon on the Duke's death in 1704: "Remigio Altissimi, that is: The ship is well governed when God is at the helm."³⁷ This ducal motto was also visualised on the multiple thalers, which commemorate the conquest of Brunswick in 1671. A galley with an inflated sail can be seen at the top, sailing on a calm sea. Above it shines the sun of God, whose name is inscribed in the sun in Hebrew letters (Fig. 27). This motto refers to the allegorical image of the 'Ship of State' already used in ancient Greece, but also later by Cicero. The Ship of State requires the guidance of a wise statesman or divine power.³⁸ The motto corresponds to the phrase DEO DUCE, used e. g., on Brandenburg-Prussian guinea ducats, which show the image of a ship, which should not be interpreted as a ship of state, but as a means of expansion.³⁹

Friedrich IV of Celle, who had experienced the suffering of his duchy throughout his reign during the Thirty Years' War and died shortly after the Peace of Westphalia, used the motto FRIED ERNEHRD – UNFRIED VERZEHRD/ *Peace nourishes, discord consumes*, which was appropriate to his politics (Fig. 28). This motto is also illustrated on a Löser. Under a radiant sun, a flourishing landscape with a rich harvest, plenty of livestock and happy miners can be seen, while on the other side, a burnt-out house and felled trees can be seen beneath rain clouds. Duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg (1564-1633) had already used this motto previously. Duke Ernst of Saxe-Gotha (Altenburg) (1640/1672-1675), a contemporary of Friedrich IV, placed the motto above the entrance to Friedenstern Palace in Gotha (Fig. 29).

³⁵ The die cutters obviously had difficulties with the Italian legend: There are two versions POI FA and POI <S>I FA, which, as Leschhorn 2010, 221 correctly points out, is to be understood as ‚Dann tu es!'. The attempts at interpretation by Duvé 1966, 93 are misleading; Müseler 1983, I no. 10.3 could not correctly identify the forms poi fa and misunderstood them.

³⁶ Cf. Von Katte 1979, 64 f. with a list of the localities he visited; the journey over the Brenner to Italy took place on 29 October 1598, the return journey over the same pass from Italy to Austria on 31.8.1600.

³⁷ Niekamp 1704, 29.

³⁸ Cf. Gerlach 1937; Van Nes 1963, 71-92.

³⁹ Cf. Neumann 1998, 403.



Fig. 27: Löser for 3 thalers: Motto of Rudolf Augustus.
 Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
 Lot 1552, Estimate: 10,000 euros.



Fig. 28: Löser for 3 thalers: Motto of Friedrich IV.
 Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
 Lot 1557, Estimate: 7,500 euros.



Fig. 29: Motto of Duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg
 above the entrance to Friedenstain Castle in Gotha.



Fig. 30: Löser for 2 thalers: Motto of Christian Ludwig.
Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1564, Estimate: 2,000 euros.

Christian Ludwig used the motto *SINCERE ET CONSTANter*/*Sincere and constant* (Fig. 30). Count Palatine Johann Kasimir (1586-1573) had already chosen this motto in the form 'constanter et sincere'. Karl Kaspar von der Leyen the Elector and Archbishop of Trier and a contemporary of Christian Ludwig (1652-1676), also used this motto. It was the motto of the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, which was founded by Margrave Georg Wilhelm of Brandenburg-Bayreuth as the 'Ordre de Sincérité' in 1705. The term 'sinceritas' can have numerous aspects: Morally, it denotes 'uprightness' and aesthetically 'authenticity'.

Christian Ludwig's brother Johann Friedrich made *EX DURIS GLORIA*/*Fame (grows) out of hard situations/difficulties* his motto. In terms of content, this motto largely corresponds to the famous 'per aspera ad astra'/*Through hardship to the stars!*, which can be traced back to the Latin philosopher Seneca.

Ernst August differs from most other Welfs in that he used several mottoes on his multiple thalers. On his accession to power in Hanover in 1680, he had multiple thalers minted depicting a seascape. A ship is travelling on a calm sea, with the sun shining above it, while clouds can be seen to its right and left. The wind emerges from the cloud on the left, billowing the ship's sails, while God stretches out his hand to keep the Osnabrück wheel (the city's coat of arms) on the right course by means of a rope. The situation of Ernst August, who was Bishop of Osnabrück from 1662 until his death in 1698, is depicted figuratively. He felt that God was guiding him and keeping him on course. The motto is *VARIIS IN MOTIBVS EADEM* and is anything but unambiguous: *With different influences, it (the ship) always remains the same or (doing) the same with different influences* (Fig. 31). A reef appears in front of the ship on the left; a storm cloud is shown above it. There is a palm tree on the beach. The palm tree took on great significance as a figurative realisation of the motto of the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft", which was 'Everything for Use'.⁴⁰ This motto meant that almost everything from this tree could be used by man and therefore the tree was one of



Fig. 31: Löser for 3 thalers: Motto of Ernst August.
Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1565, Estimate: 10,000 euros.

⁴⁰ Cf. Neumark 1668, passim.



Fig. 32: Devise of the Fruit-Bearing Society, original in the Duchess Anna Amalia Library in Weimar, inv. no. 487, oil on canvas.

the most useful ones; this was also to be the aim of the society (Fig. 32). In this respect, the palm tree is presumably intended to indicate that the maxims of the “Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft” have shaped his life in addition to God’s help. With his elevation to Prince of Calenberg in 1680, Ernst August chose the motto SOLA BONA QVÆ HONESTA/Only what is honourable is good. Carl Ludwig zu Hohenlohe-Weikersheim (1674-1756), to whom we owe the extension of the famous Weikersheim Palace with its magnificent garden, also used this motto.

Historical Events Reflected by Multiple Thalers

1625: One of the important events during these duke’s reign was the discovery of a new, profitable vein of ore in the Harz Mountains, which provided the duke with a rich supply of silver. In 1623, Friedrich Ulrich had brought the St Jacob mine in the Laute valley under his control and invested money in it. As a result, the otherwise less fortunate duke and his co-investors were able to realise significant returns in silver in the following years.⁴¹



Fig. 33: Löser for 2 thalers: Jacob’s Löser Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1543, Estimate: 15,000 euros.

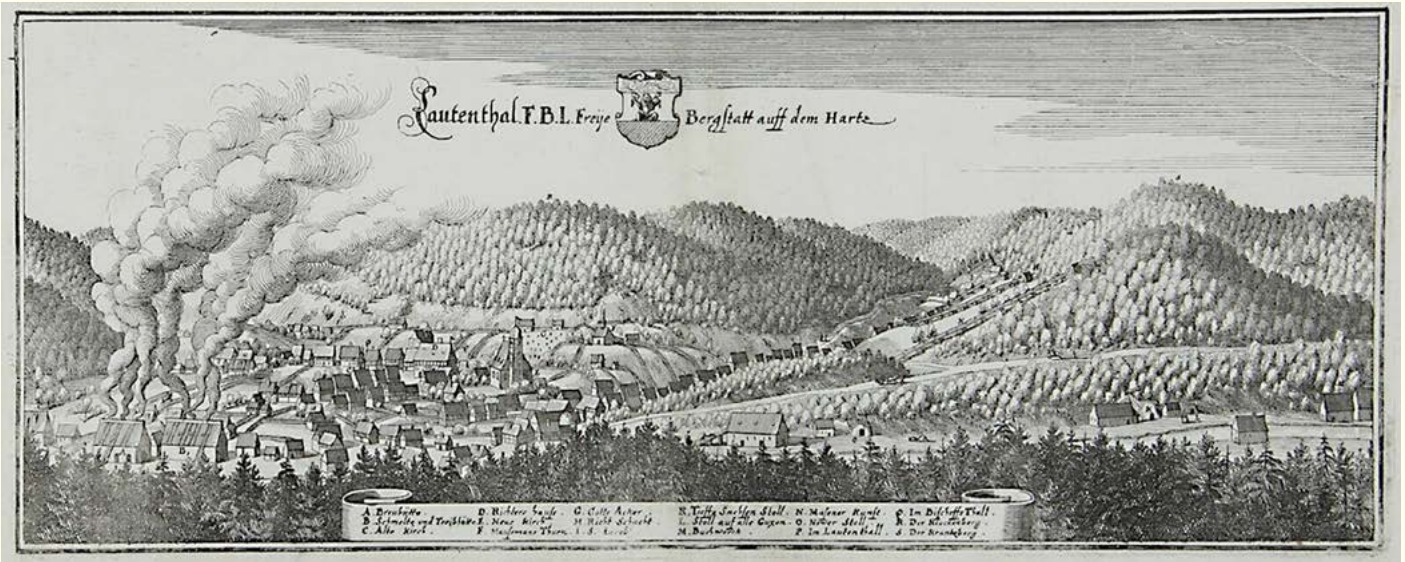


Fig. 34: Matthäus Merian, *View of Lautenthal*, c. 1650, JN.

On the Wolfenbüttel multiple thalers minted by Friedrich Ulrich in 1625 two hexameters are placed around an image of St Jacob in an outer inscription: ECCE METALLIFERI CHELYS ANTE AFFLICTA IACOBI NÜC PTER MODUL:(os) ARGËTI PÖDER-(a) DONAT (Fig. 32). Reading and understanding the two verses correctly is not easy, as numerous abbreviations are used in the second hexameter. The strokes above a vowel indicate the absence of a following N. This goes back to an old tradition, as the N was pronounced nasalised already in classical Latin: Thus, the word consul was abbreviated to cos. A dash above the P of PTER indicates that the preposition P(rae) TER is to be read there (a so-called internal abbreviation), a colon after MODUL denotes the omission of -os (not -um, which is metrically impossible)⁴² and after PÖDER a dot denotes the omission of an -a. The two hexameters are therefore to be read as follows:

ecce metalliferi chelys ante afflictia iacobi
nunc praeter modulus argenti pondera donat.
*See how Jacob's lute, which was previously damaged,
beyond the songs today brings pounds of silver.*

These are two highly scholarly and graceful verses in humanist Latin. The Greek word 'chelys' goes back to a presumably Mediterranean, i.e. pre-Greek word for tortoise. The god Hermes is said to have invented the first stringed instrument by covering a tortoise shell with strings made of bovine intestine. 'Chelys' eventually became a name for various stringed instruments. In this Latin humanist verse, it refers to the lute. It alludes to the name of the streamlet in whose valley the St Jacob's ore mine was located: Laute (lute). 'ante afflictia'/ *previously damaged* refers to the fact that Duke Friedrich Ulrich

first had to refurbish the St. Jacobs mine situated in the Laute valley (Fig. 34) before it could yield large quantities of silver. Metaphorically speaking: St Jacob's lute had become playable again and was once more able to produce melodious tunes. The poet who wrote this verse may have been thinking of the sound of silver coins. The inner inscription reads: SINE DEO NIHIL - FELICITER SUCCEDIT/*Without God nothing has a happy ending*. The word 'succedit' is used with an ulterior meaning, as 'succedere' initially means 'to come up from below' and can refer to the ore that is extracted from the depths of the earth.

⁴¹ Spruth 1986, 41: „The fundamental change since the takeover of mining by the sovereign can be explained by the fact that only the lack of capitalisation of the trade union had led to its decline. With sufficient funds, the mining authority repaired the neglected shafts and tunnels, prepared sufficient workings and soon achieved visible successes“.

⁴² Incorrectly completed by Spruth 1986, 41.



Fig. 35: Löser for 5 thalers: TANDEM/ In the end, nevertheless!
 Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
 Lot 1544, Estimate: 40,000 euros.

1638: When Duke Friedrich Ulrich died childless in August 1634 and the principality of Wolfenbüttel became vacant, the Welfs had a succession dispute which only ended in December 1635 with the investiture of August the Younger.⁴³ In 1638, Duke August received imperial recognition of the family agreements with the 'Privilegium de non appellando' from Emperor Ferdinand III (1637-1657). Multiple thalers celebrate this event by showing the prince galloping in armour with a bastone (staff of command) in his hand. The mining landscape of the Harz Mountains and Wolfenbüttel Castle can be seen in the background: These coins show the Duke's territory, since that time also recognised by the emperor. In the field is the inscription TANDEM/In the end, nevertheless! (Fig. 35)

April 1666: On 10 April 1666, Duke August the Younger celebrated his 88th birthday. Multiple thalers were issued showing the Duke's portrait with a cap-like headgear. The personifications of Iustitia/Justice with sword and scales in her left hand and of Pax/Peace with a palm branch wreath the Duke with the ducal hat and an olive wreath. Above this is an explanatory inscription: FAUSTUM IUSTITIAE ET PACIS CONSORTIUM/The auspicious companionship of Justice and Peace. Another type of multiple thaler again shows the bust of the Duke, crowned by a winged Virtus/Virtue with the wreath of virtue. A winged Fama/Fame draws attention to this coronation with a trumpet blast. The inscription – an hexameter – reads: AUGUSTI AUGUSTAM VIRTUTEM FAMA CORONAT/Fame crowns August's sublime virtue (Fig. 36 and 10).

September 1666: Just a few months after his 88th birthday, Duke August the Younger died on 17 September 1666. For distribution at his funeral service, multiple thalers were minted with the following inscription on the reverse: NATUS | A(nn)O 1579 10. APR(ilis) | REXIT | DUCAT(um) ET COMITAT(ūs) | SUOS ANNOS XXXI | OBIIT | 17. SEPT(embri) A(nn)O MDCLXVI | VIXIT | ANNOS LXXXVII | MENSES V | DIESVII/He was born in 1579 on 10 April; he ruled his duchy and his counties for 31 years; he died on 17 September 1666; he lived 87 years, 5 months, 7 days. For more details see below under Chronograms (Fig. 37).

1671: In this year, the Welf dukes succeeded in capturing Brunswick in a joint campaign.⁴⁴ After the conquest, the city was transferred to Rudolf August: from then on, Brunswick belonged to the Principality of Wolfenbüttel and eventually became the dukes' seat after Wolfenbüttel was abandoned. In 1679, in honour of his great success, Rudolf August had multiple thalers minted showing the ship of state of the Principality of Wolfenbüttel on the reverse and the silhouettes of the cities of Brunswick and Wolfenbüttel below (Fig. 27).

⁴³ Cf. Arnold 1979.

⁴⁴ Cf. Querfurth 1953.

⁴⁵ Spruth 1986, 66.

⁴⁶ Spruth 1986, 71, which I cannot follow in some particulars, goes into detail on this coin.



Fig. 36: Löser for 4 thalers: August the Younger's birthday Löser. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1549, Estimate: 10,000 euros.

1681: Under Rudolf August von Braunschweig Wolfenbüttel and Ernst August von Braunschweig Calenberg, another rich vein of ore was found in Lautenthal in 1681. The 'Lautenthals Glück' mine, which went back to the St. Jacobs mine, had fallen into disrepair towards the end of the Thirty Years' War,⁴⁵ and capital first had to be found for the restoration of a profitable mine. Multiple Thalers from 1685 celebrate the success of the investment. In front of the silhouette of the Lautenthal valley and above-ground conveyor systems, they show a female lute player with a wind-blown pennant, which is intended to show that mining activity has picked up speed. The lute player is often also associated with Fortuna, the goddess of luck. She is standing on a snail, which is intended to evoke the popular expression 'festina lente'. To this day, the snail is the symbol for the 'snail's pace' named after her. In mining, however, one can only achieve good results with patience and persistence. The sun and moon shine in the sky on either side; the name of God is inscribed on the sun in Hebrew. A hexameter surrounds the scene TU TANDEM ABIECTAM REDDES DEUS ALME SONORAM/Thou blessing God will finally bring back the lost sound – the verse is to be understood with regard to the lute player depicted. The investors will have understood it slightly differently: You blessing-giving God will return the investment in ringing coins to us in the end! (Fig. 38).⁴⁶



Fig. 37: Löser of 4 thalers: Löser minted on August the Younger's death. Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1551, Estimate: 40,000 euros.



Fig. 38: Löser for 3 thalers: Lautenthal's Luck.
 Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection. Lot 1554, Estimate: 7,500 euros.



Fig. 39: Löser for 3 thalers:
 August the Younger's coat of arm.
 Künker Auction Sale 412,
 The Regina Adams Collection.
 Lot 1545, Estimate: 5,000 euros.

⁴⁷ Schupp 2003, 127.

⁴⁸ Cf. Schimmelpfenning 1990, 187 f.
 who reflects on the origin of the ceremonial.

⁴⁹ Listed in Schupp 2003, 162.

Chronograms

Chronograms (derived from the Greek 'chronos'/time and 'gramma'/letter) are sentences whose letters, understood as Latin numerals, add up to a specific date. They have – as on the multiple thalers – the function of an inscription insofar as they connect the factor of time with an object and contribute to its understanding. They also have a puzzle and game function, as they must be deciphered and understood. Frequently, they assert a literary claim by appearing in verse.⁴⁷

Three chronograms can be found on the reverse of the Löser commemorating the death of August the Younger. In the outer inscription **OMNIA NON NISI PROVIDO ET VEGETO CONSILIO**/*Do everything only with foresight and good planning*, the Duke's motto **ALLES MIT BEDACHT** is translated into a Latin hexameter. If all the letters corresponding to Roman numerals (**MIIIVIDVCILI**) are arranged in order of value (**MDCLVVI** = 1666), then they provide the year of the Duke's death. Chronograms that appear in a hexameter or other verse type are called chronostichon (from the Greek 'stichos'/verse).

The two inner inscriptions and a text in the field of the multiple thalers reproduce three sentences: * **QVAE LAETA FRONDE VIREBAM** */ *As this [tree] I once greened with cheerful foliage*. reads the upper inscription. The lower inner inscription refers back to the well-known saying: **SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI**/*Thus passes worldly glory*. This exclamation, which is still used today, comes from the coronation ceremony of the popes. During the coronation procession, flax was burnt three times in front of the pope and the exclamation "Sancte pater, sic transit gloria mundi" was proclaimed.⁴⁸ Above and below the defoliated tree, on the trunk of which a skull is placed, is the inscription **NUNC - RIGUI**/*Now I am frozen!* (Fig. 37).

These inscriptions contain 2 chronograms. The text of the upper half for the first chronogram and that of the lower half for the second chronogram must be taken together: **QVAE LAETA FRONDE VIREBAM, NVNC: VLDVIMVC** = **MDCLVVVI** = 1666. — **RIGUI, SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MVNDI: IIICILIMVDI** = **MDCLIIIIII** = 1666.⁴⁹

Some Notes on the Iconography of the Multiple Thalers



Fig. 40: Coat of arms above the entrance of Wolfenbüttel Castle, JN.

The Coats of Arms

The dukes used coats of arms to highlight their territorial possessions. This resulted in carefully composed coats of arms, which, however, had to be changed in case of gains or losses of territory. For exemplary purposes, the coat of arms of Duke August the Younger on a very beautiful multiple thaler from the Regina Adams Collection minted in 1655 is described in more detail (Fig. 39 and 40).

The escutcheon has the form of a baroque shield, which is not framed by supporters but by tendrils.

In the first row, the blue lion of the Principality of Lüneburg appears in the first field on a golden background with red hearts. In the second field, two golden leopards/lions appear on a red background as the coat of arms of the Principality of Brunswick. The two leopards are said to have come to Brunswick through Mathilda, the second wife of Henry the Lion and daughter of Henry II of England. To this day, the English kings have three leopards in their coat of arms. In the third field, the silver lion on a blue background represents the county of Everstein near Holzminden.

In the second row, the golden lion on a red background of the Lordship of Homburg (around Stadtoldendorf) appears in the first field, surrounded by a blue and silver border. In the second field, the red lion on a golden background represents the upper part of the coat of arms of the County of Diepholz; in the third field, the golden lion on a red background appears as the upper part of the coat of arms of Lauterberg in the Harz Mountains.

In the third row, the first field is divided: Above the two black bear paws on a golden background of the County of Hoya, below the red-silver-red horizontal stripes of Neu-Bruchhausen and the four blue windmill wings on a silver background of Alt-Bruchhausen. The silver eagle on a blue background in the second field forms the lower part of the coat of arms of the County of Diepholz. The third field is again divided: The county of Hohnstein is represented by a silver and red shaded field, while the red and gold stripes below belong to the coat of arms of Lauterberg.

In the fourth row, the black stag on a silver background of the 1st field represents the County of Klettenberg. The second field combines the black antler of the County of Blankenburg with the red antler of Regenstein, both on a silver background.

The upper coat of arms consists of five helmets. The centre helmet is topped by a ducal crown. Above it rises a crest consisting of a low pillar from which a pole rises, decorated at the top with peacock feathers. The white Welf horse is placed galloping in front of the pole. This scene is surrounded by two sickles with their edges pointing inwards; tips of peacock feathers protrude from behind the outer edge of the sickles.

Two helmets are placed to the left of the centre helmet: The outer one bears the red and silver stag's antlers of the County of Hohnstein; the green peacock feathers between them represent Lauterburg. The other helmet bears the two bear paws of the County of Hoya.



Fig. 41: Löser for 5 thalers:
Heinrich Julius on horseback.
Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1540, Estimate: 10,000 euros.



Fig. 42: Löser for 5 thalers:
Friedrich Ulrich on horseback.
Künker Auction Sale 412, The Regina Adams Collection.
Lot 1541, Estimate: 10,000 euros.



To the right of the centre helmet another helmet is crowned by the two silver-blue divided buffalo horns of Alt-Bruchhausen; Neu-Bruchhausen is represented by 12 red and silver flags. Above the helmet on the far right is a red stag's antler for Regenstein, a black stag's antler for Blankenburg and a pair of buffalo horns in red and silver for Diepholz between them.

Very different shield supporters can be seen on the multiple thalers in the Regina Adams Collection. Two wild men appear on a multiple thaler of Friedrich Ulrich (Fig. 13). On another coinage of the same duke, two Brunswick leopards/lions hold his coat of arms (Fig. 15).⁵⁰

Depictions of the Mounted Dukes

Numerous multiple thalers of the earlier Welf princes show the Duke on horseback. This applies to Heinrich Julius, Friedrich Ulrich, August the Younger and Rudolph August (Fig. 38, 41-42).

The depiction of the ruler as a horseman became increasingly important during the Renaissance. Even in the early Renaissance, numerous princes and army commanders (condottieri) had themselves depicted as horsemen.⁵¹ They often held a command staff/bastone in their hand, which indicated their military function.⁵²

⁵⁰ Cf. the very useful essays of Peter 1 and Peter 2, 2011.

⁵¹ Cf. Beuing 2010.

⁵² For the Bastone cf. the detailed discussion of Erben 1996, 300 f.

The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, which was erected in 1538 in the Capitoline Square redesigned by Michelangelo, played a prominent role (Fig. 44).⁵³ The statue of Marcus Aurelius – which had only survived because it had been thought to an equestrian image of Emperor Constantine until Renaissance scholars were able to correctly identify the emperor depicted – served from then on as a model for many equestrian monuments of rulers. An equestrian statue could elevate and monumentalise a ruler more than any other form of representation. It became the iconic symbol of sovereign power. Only the Catholic princes of the church refrained from having themselves depicted in this way.



Fig. 43: The coats of arms of the German federal states of Niedersachsen and Nordrhein-Westfalen, showing the Saxon steed.

In numerous Renaissance writings, the relationship between rider and horse was transposed to the relationship between ruler and ruled. The people were equated directly with the horse.⁵⁴ Just as the horse should obey the rider, the subjects should obey the ruler. “The ability to rule a horse was equated with the ability to rule a people”.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the prince was to treat the ruled with the same care and concern with which a good rider treats his horse. Such ideas were repeatedly discussed in Renaissance treatises in connection with equestrian imagery: The ruler’s claim to obedience was counterbalanced by the people’s expectation that the ruler possessed ruling virtues, as expressed, for example, in the mottos of the princes.

After the French Revolution, in which the monuments of rulers on horseback were brought down both de facto and as ideals, equestrian images showing the ruler on foot next to his horse appeared more often. One of these is the monument to Duke August the Younger on the market square in Wolfenbüttel, which emphasises the ruler’s special care of his horse: “The new form of the equestrian image was ingeniously simple: The democratic leader dismounted from his high horse and led the horse by the reins. In this way, groundedness, equality with the people, was established.”⁵⁶

For the Welf princes, however, the horse had another meaning. The rearing white Welf or Saxon steed had been an identifying animal for the Welfs since the later Middle Ages. Traditions about the special significance of (white) horses can be traced in this region, albeit not coherently, from antiquity to the present day. In ancient times, Tacitus pointed out how the North Germanic tribes worshipped white horses in their sanctuaries and received prophetic messages based on their behaviour.⁵⁷ Even today, the federal states of Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia use a white horse as their heraldic animal.

⁵³ Grammacini 1985.

⁵⁴ Prochno-Schinkel 2023, 11, quoting the Italian scholar and poet Francesco Sansovino (1512-1586): „Il cavallo significa il popolo“.

⁵⁵ Prochno-Schinkel 2023, 10.

⁵⁶ Prochno-Schinkel 2023, 16.

⁵⁷ Germania 10.

⁵⁸ Luckhardt - Marth 2006.

⁵⁹ Junkelmann 2001, 233.



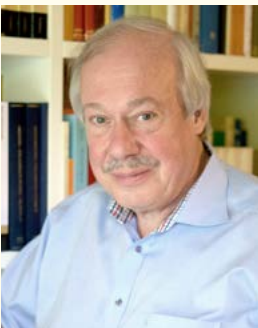
Fig. 44: Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitoline Square in Rome, Radomil, Wikipedia.

Portraits of the Dukes with Allonge Wigs

Even if the Protestant Welfs only rarely maintained close relations with Catholic France, the culture of the French court of Louis XIV (1643-1715) also extended to Lower Saxony. This becomes clear in the allonge wigs worn by Welf dukes such as Rudolph August and Ernst August on the multiple thalers (Fig. 13 and 17). The allonge wig, which, as its name suggests, fell 'long' over the shoulders to the chest, was declared a state wig by Louis XIV in 1673, but quickly found enthusiastic aristocratic wearers all over Europe. This also had to do with the rampant syphilis at the time, which had led to hair loss, not least among numerous "grand tour" princes.⁵⁸

However, the wig was not used only to conceal the consequences of this disease. It was an important prop for the rulers of Europe in their self-presentation on the political stage. Marcus Junkelmann has described this aptly: "The lion-like mane of hair made the wearer appear taller and more powerful, more disciplined and enhanced the imperfect work of nature. It was part of a costume, a mask, in which the members of courtly society played their roles on the stage of the great world, stylised to the highest degree by etiquette and the code of honour, in absolute separation from the ordinary rest of humanity."⁵⁹ With the death of Louis XIV in 1715, this fad quickly fell into oblivion.

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After his habilitation at Bremen University and habilitation recognition at the Ludwig Maximilians-University in Munich he was appointed associate professor in 1998. From 1985 to 2014 he was a research scholar of German Archaeological Institute at the Commission for Ancient History and Epigraphy in Munich. He has been a scientific consultant for our company since 1st of July, 2019.

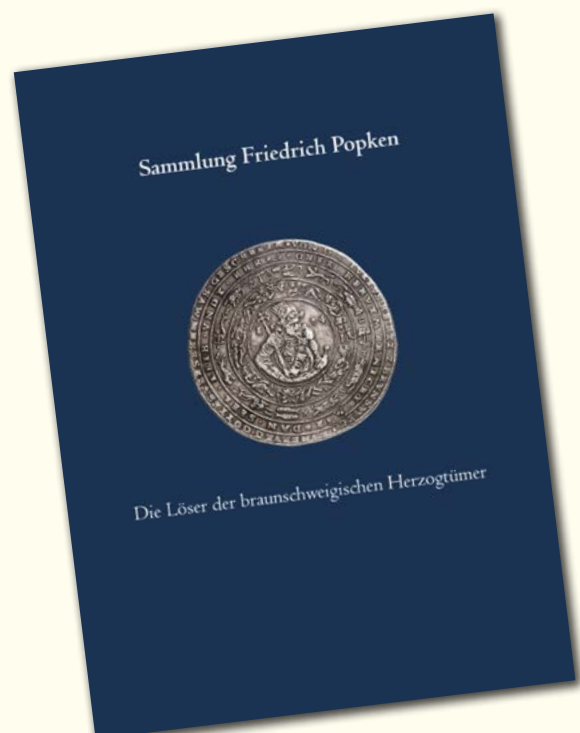
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Gebhard Duve's book, published in Johannesburg/South Africa, in 1966, still offers the most comprehensive overview of the Löser. It meticulously identifies the various issues known at the time and attempts to categorise them historically. The excellent book by Wolfgang Leschhorn on the Brunswick coins and medals, which offers the best historical and iconographic categorisation of the Wolfenbüttel Löser, is indispensable for the coinage of the Wolfenbüttel line. Important is the essay by Ernst-Henri Balan, who does away with all kinds of nonsensical ideas about the purpose of these coins - in particular based on Rehtmeyer's description. Bernd Kluge rightly adopted this correct view of things in his commentary volume on the Preussag collection and further clarified it. Friedrich Popkens' collection of Löser has just been published; the volume provides marvellous photographs and will be an important reference work.

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