

# Australian cartography: a numismatic perspective



1

**Obverse:** laureate head of Antoninus Pius, facing right, AD 138-161

**Reverse:** Egyptian shrine with two columns with papyrus capitals, supporting arched pediment, disk and uraei on; within a seated statue of Isis, facing right, wearing horns, disk and plumes, suckling Harpokrates (Horus) who wears the skhent (crown of upper and lower Egypt).

Metal: bronze Size: 33 mm

Mint: Alexandria, Egypt

## PETER LANE

For centuries, coins and medals have depicted maps of Australia, although rarely if at all have they been studied by scholars. Perhaps this is because of their limited contribution to cartography, as they were used mainly in a political sense. Perhaps collectors and academics are simply unaware of their existence. All these pieces are scarce and some very rare.

Rather than telling the story of mapping and charting our coastline, which has been recorded elsewhere many times, I have focused on why they were issued. There are no catalogues on this subject. The specimens illustrated here are not a full listing of this topic but are representative.

This article also records two associated pieces for the sake of completeness. The specimens date from AD 149, when the Old World concept of a southern land was first thought of, up to the mid-1820s when the world coastlines were virtually fully mapped.

## 1 Antoninus Pius, bronze drachm, Alexandria Mint, Egypt, Year 12 of reign (circa AD 148/149)

A world map was drawn in Alexandria in AD 150 and is known as the Ptolemy map after the cartographer Claudius Ptolemy who created it. This world map was the first to show a great southern land mass. This map was lost but rediscovered in Italy in the Middle Ages. Claudius Ptolemy would have used coins like this one of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, as they circulated in Egypt and the Roman Empire during his lifetime.





## 2 Drake medal (hand engraved) c. 1580

The engraving on the medal is usually attributed to Michael Mercator (c 1565/70–1600). Other contenders to have engraved the medal are Jodocus Hondius (1563–1612), born Wakken (Belgium), arrived in England 1584, left 1594 and lived remainder of his life in Amsterdam, or “F.G.”, a French engraver possibly associated with Richard Hakluyt. The main argument in favour of Mercator is that one medal has his name on it. The date of the Drake medal has always been circa 1580. I suggest it may have been created later, perhaps 1584 to 1600, as Mercator would have only been 10 or 15 years of age in 1580, and Jodocus Hondius only 17.

The Drake medal, of which only nine are known, was engraved to celebrate the first circumnavigation of the globe. The two islands that seem to be tucked into the Gulf of Carpentaria (not yet recorded by Europeans) are named Petan and Iaua [Java] minor; the latter and larger island is thought to be Lombok or possibly Bali.



**2 Obverse:** Map of the western hemisphere, regions named, latitude and longitude lines. Australia-Antarctica shown as one land mass. The large island to the north is named NO. GUINEA. The map records the route taken by Sir Francis Drake when he circumnavigated the globe.

**Reverse:** Map of the eastern hemisphere, regions named, latitude and longitude lines. Australia-Antarctica shown as one land mass and this mass is recorded as TERRA AV[STRALIS]NVNDVM. Two small islands to the north of Australia are recorded as Petan and Iaua minor (Java). The map records the route taken by Sir Francis Drake when he circumnavigated the globe.

Collection: Dixon Library, State Library of NSW, ZDN/M1144a & b

Metal: silver Size: 68 mm

## 3 Hesse-Kassel thaler 1669

Princess Hedwig Sophia (1623–1683) was the younger daughter of George Wilhelm, Margrave of Brandenburg (1619 – 1640), and his wife Charlotte Elisabeth of Palatine-Rhine. In 1649 Hedwig Sophia married Landgrave Wilhelm VI of Hesse-Kassel and became his consort. She bore him six children and, with the death of her husband in 1663, the Landgravine ruled from 1663 to 1670 as Regent for her eldest son Wilhelm VII (b 1651, ruled 1663 –1670) who died without issue, and then for his younger brother Karl I (b 1654, ruled 1670–1730).

**3 Obverse:** An armorial shield with hat above, all seeing eye with JOHOVA in Hebrew above, ropes around the shield, Inscription around HEDWIG SOPHIA. V:G:G:L:Z:H:G:A:C:S:P: M:Z:B:W:V:U. REGENTIN (Hedwig Sophia, By the grace of God, Landgravine of Hesse, born of the electoral line of the Margraves of Brandenburg, widow, guardian and Regent.)

**Reverse:** A winged heart, sword cutting a cord from world, around rim DISSOLVOR ANNO 1669. The continents are named: VRQPA [Europe] TARTARIA ASIA AFRICA and HOLLAN NO [an abridged form of Nova (or New) Holland]. Cities appear as circles and Australia has three imaginary ones. Animals populate the land: elephants, lions [?] and horses [?]. A whale [?], a sea monster below Australia and four ships decorate the oceans.

Metal: silver Size: 43 mm





#### 4 Charles II British Colonisation medal 1670

**Obverse:** conjoined busts of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza facing right, he wearing a breast plate and she draped. Around, CAROLVS ET CATHARINA REX ET REGINA [Charles and Catherine king and queen].

**Reverse:** a globe depicting all the continents; Antarctic and Australia (west coast only) joined as one land mass. Around: DIFFVSVS IN ORBE BRITANNVS 1670 [Briton spread over the world]. Metal: silver Size: 41mm Engraver: John Roettier (1631–1703), born Antwerp, arrived in England 1661. Reference: Betts 44.

This medal may allude to the dowry brought with Charles II's marriage, which laid the foundation of the British Empire in India, or possibly to the acquisition of territory notably in North America and Asia.

Charles II (1630–1685) was restored in 1660 as king of Great Britain. In 1670 he married Catherine of Braganza (1638–1705). Catherine was born into the House of Braganza, the most senior noble house in Portugal which became Portugal's royal house after Catherine's father, John, 8th Duke of Braganza, was proclaimed King John IV, after deposing the House of Habsburg in 1640.



#### 5 Duchess of Portsmouth medal c. 1673

**Obverse:** Duchess facing right, around, LVCIA DVCISSA PORTSMOVTHEISIS [Lucy, Duchess of Portsmouth]

**Reverse:** Cupid seated, facing right, around OMNIA VINCIT [[love] conquers all].

Metal: silver

Size: 28 mm

Engraver: George Bower (1664–1689)

Mint: Royal Mint London.

This satirical medal commemorates the title of Duchess of Portsmouth conferred on Louise de K rouaille (1649–1734) on 19 August 1673. The Duchess was a mistress of Charles II, who gave her the titles of Baroness Petersfield, Countess of Fareham and Duchess of Portsmouth. Around 1675 she brought to Charles' attention a young Frenchman who proposed a solution to the longitude problem. While the French proposal was ineffective, it led Charles to establish the Royal Observatory, Greenwich.



#### 6 Queen Christina medal 1680

**Obverse:** Head of Christina facing right, around: REGINA CHRISTINA. On truncation: IH [engraver's initials]

**Reverse:** Eastern Hemisphere, around: NE MI BISOGNA NE MI BASTA [I do not need it, it is not enough for me.]

Metal: bronze

Size: 36 mm

Engraver: Giovanni Hamerani (1649–1705)

Mint: Rome

Christina was born 1622 in Stockholm and died in 1689 in Rome. She was Queen Regent of Sweden from 1632, abdicating her throne in 1654 and converting from Lutheran to Roman Catholic later in 1654. She spent her later years in Rome and was a benefactor of the arts. She is one of the few women buried in the Vatican grotto. Christina's first cousin on her mother's side was Hedwig Sophia of Brandenburg who issued the 1669 Hesse-Kassel thaler.





## 7 Naples ducato 1684

**Obverse:** Bust of Charles II bareheaded and draped, armoured collar of the Golden Fleece, facing right. Around, CAROLVS II DG HISPANAR NEAP REX [Charles II by the grace of God King of Spain, Naples]. Below bust IM [engraver's initials].

**Reverse:** A western and eastern hemisphere with a mace between, a crown above, with a banner above with the words, UNVS NON SVFFICIT [One is not sufficient] Below, AG/A. 1684.

Metal: silver Size: 41.5 mm

Engraver: IM [John Montemein]

Mint: Naples, mint officers: AG [Andrea Giovane] and A [Marco Antonio Ariani]

Reference: Davenport 4045

This coin is believed to be one of the inspirations for the later pillar dollar of Latin America. Charles II's (1661–1700) father died in 1665 and his mother acted as regent until she died in 1696, due originally to his youth then his mental incapacity (due to inbreeding). He then ruled in his own right until his death in 1700. His realm included Southern Netherlands, Spain's overseas empire in the Americas, Naples and Sicily. The two hemispheres may allude to his territories around the world.



## 8 Mexico Mint 'hemisphere' dollar (8 reales) 1769

**Obverse:** Crowned Spanish coat-of-arms, assayers' initials and value on either side. Latin Legend: CAROLVS III D G HISPAN ET IND REX [Charles III by the Grace of God, King of the Spain and Indies] MF [Assayer's initials] 8

**Reverse:** Crowned hemispheres, between crowned and banner-entwined pillars, all set on the ocean. Around: VTRAQUE VNVM [On both sides Unity] [mint mark] 1769

Photo courtesy Noble Numismatics, sale 92, lot 2774

Metal: silver

Size: 40 mm

Mint: Mexico City

This specimen was struck the year before Captain Cook discovered the east coast of Australia. In 1813, New South Wales holey dollars were struck from Spanish dollars but none are known struck from 'hemisphere' dollars.

The hemisphere dollars were minted from 1732 to 1772 at the Mexico City, Santiago, Lima, Guatemala, Bogotá and Potosi mints.



## 9 New Century medal 1800

**Obverse:** Angel on right holding a parchment with the word ERFAHRUNG [discovery]. A bearded angel with walking stick on left, another parchment below the other with the word AUSTRALIEN [Australia] on it, a telescope (?) and books to the right. Around top, DIE BESTE LEHRERIN [the best teacher]. In exergue engraver's name, C.I. KRUGER. F.

**Reverse:** A globe with the words SACHSEN [Saxony] BRAN [Brandenburg] BOEHM [Bohemia] all surrounded by sea, at base a plaque with '1800'. At top DAS SCHEIDENDE IAHRHUNDERT [Turn of the century]

Metal: silver Size: 40 mm

Engraver: C I Kruger Mint: Dresden, Saxony

This medal alludes to the future scientific importance of Australia as seen in 1800 by Germans. Johann Reinhold Forster (1729–98), author and naturalist, who sailed with Lt James Cook, was appointed to a chair at the University of Halle, at the time in the Electorate of Saxony where the medal was minted in the capital, Dresden. This may have created the focus on Australia. Forster had translated, edited or reviewed many accounts of voyages to the Pacific including those of Arthur Phillip, John Hunter and John White.



**Obverse:** Bust of Napoleon Bonaparte wearing breastplate and cloak, facing left. Around: INSCRIBED TO NAPOLEON BONAPARTE BY D: ECCLESTON \* LANCASTER \* On truncation J. HANCOCK.

**Reverse:** Centre, Eastern Hemisphere, with continents named, EUROPE ASIA AFRICA and EASTERN OCEAN (Indian Ocean) [Australia depicted but not named, and Tasmania and the mainland are joined] Around, HE GAVE TO FRANCE LIBERTY TO THE WORLD PEACE in small letters, MDCCCII

Metal: white metal Size: 58 mm Engraver: John Gregory Hancock

Publisher: Daniel Eccleston. Reference: Nobles sale 60, lot 985

## 10 Peace of Amiens medal 1802

The Treaty of Amiens ended hostilities between the French Republic and the United Kingdom during the French Revolutionary Wars. It was signed in Amiens on 25 March 1802; the truce lasted only till 18 May 1803. During this brief cessation of hostilities, Matthew Flinders and Nicholas Baudin met on 8 and 9 April 1802 off the coast of South Australia at Encounter Bay, near the mouth of the Murray River; neither was aware of the treaty but they had documents to allow their ships to travel freely as they were both on exploring and research expeditions.

Daniel Eccleston of Lancaster (1745–1821) was an enlightened radical Quaker and enthusiastic numismatist. The illustrated medal is scarce and not recorded in most major numismatic catalogues. This is not surprising as it is a rare medal; in England at the time there was little interest in acquiring a medal depicting Napoleon as a hero. Eccleston also issued tokens and other medals and had a lifelong interest in Aboriginal rights. This attitude and interest in numismatics is reflected in another of his medals, which depicts George Washington in a suit of armour (a warrior) and an Indian standing with head downcast, with the words 'THE LAND WAS OURS'.

## 11 Thomason's large Hemisphere medal, c. 1820s



**Obverse:** A map of the western hemisphere, with numerous place names, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge.

**Reverse:** A map of the eastern hemisphere, with numerous place names, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge. Australia is shown as one land mass (no Bass Strait). Australia is recorded as NEW HOLLAND and locations named: VAN DIEMANS LAND [sic], Botany B., C. York, Tryal Rocks, Sharks Bay, South Head, and Endeavour Strait.

Metal: white metal Size: 74 mm

Engraver: Thomas Halliday

Mint: Thomason, Birmingham

Reference: Eimer 160/1139a

The engraver Thomas Halliday (c. 1780–1854) trained as an engraver at Matthew Boulton's Soho Mint before establishing his own business in Birmingham c. 1810 to 1842. He engraved dies for many token and medallion makers.

Sir Edward Thomason (c. 1769–1849) originally worked for Matthew Boulton before setting up his own business. In 1800 he became a founding member of the Birmingham Philosophical Society.

Thomason's factory in Birmingham was established in the early 1790s and he is well known for his inventions including a corkscrew he patented in 1802. In 1807 he added a medal and token department. In 1828 his workshop finished a series of 16 medals on scientific subjects, including hemisphere medals. In 1817 he struck a series of Napoleonic medals for James Mudie and this venture proved to be a huge scale failure. By 1822 Sir Charles Forbes and the Colonial Office gave Mudie and his daughters free travel to New South Wales and a land grant.



**12 Thomason's small hemisphere medal, c. 1820s**

**Obverse:** A map of the western hemisphere, with numerous place names, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge.

**Reverse:** A map of the eastern hemisphere, latitude and longitude lines with degrees recorded around the edge. Australia is named NEW HOLLAND and VAN DIEMANS LAND [sic], and the location of Botany B [Bay] is named. To the north of Australia, Endeavour Strait is named.

Metal: white metal

Size: 51 mm

Engraver: Thomas Halliday

Mint: Thomason, Birmingham

Refer previous medal for further information.



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**Peter Lane** is a life member of our Society, Honorary Numismatist at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Secretary of the Numismatic Association of Australia, and a numismatic expert examiner under the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*. He has focussed his research on exploration medals, hemisphere coins and medals, convict love tokens, and British military medals awarded to those who served in colonial Australia. He has written a history of the AGSA numismatic collection which is envisaged to be published later this year. He can be contacted at [pnj.lane@bigpond.com](mailto:pnj.lane@bigpond.com)

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