Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering

Revision History

Numbering New Types

V1	2023-08-12	Published as a separate white paper.

International Numbering

V1	2023-08-12	Published as a separate white paper.
V1.0.1	2023-08-19	Reported that Canada is part of the 000 club

Notes on Numbering

V2	2023-09-01	Added Medal(country), merged White Papers into one to reduce repetition.
V2.1	2024-02-11	Varieties note
V2.2	2025-04-23	Rationalized the multi coin slabs

Author

BURTON STRAUSS, ANA#5136

Contents

Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering
Notes on Numbering New Types

In the first edition of *Sample Slabs*, coins of the same denomination were reasonably well sorted by date. The good news is that the second edition has many more listings. The bad news is that every way of adding items to an existing taxonomy has drawbacks. Renumbering is inconvenient to users of the existing system, adding decimal numbers results in increasingly unwieldy distinctions (type 1, type 1.1, type 1.05, type 1.025, etc.), and adding numbers to the end of each section causes items out of order. This edition uses the third method, which, if it does not keep coin dates in order, at least avoids renumbering every edition.

Someday, when all of the early samples are known with relative certainty, some future researcher may renumber the entire series from 1 to X. As an example, Lyman Low, author of Hard Times Tokens, the first book on the subject in 1899, added new types to the end of his Low numbers as he discovered them, improving the catalog, but leading to dates and locations out of order. Much later, Russell Rulau's Standard Catalog of Hard Times Tokens reorganized the entire series into the HT numbers most often used today.

United States and Canadian Coins

Our USD/CAD are divided into 100 minor units (cents, not pennies). In the earlier editions, USA/CAN[1] coins were listed in cents not dollars using three digits, we have kept that practice. Instead of being listed as XYZ-1-1-1 a US$1 coin is listed in our catalog as XYZ-100-1-1. A 25c cent (quarter dollar) is XYZ-025-1-1 not XYZ-25c-1-1.

		ISO 4127		
ENTITY	**Currency**	**Alphabetic Code**	**Numeric Code**	**Minor unit**
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (THE)	US Dollar	USD	840	2
CANADA	Canadian Dollar	CAD	124	2

Table 1 - US and Canada

Numbering of exonumia (3rd Edition)

In the 1st and 2nd edition, exonumia - numismatic items other than coins and paper money – used simple abbreviations or words as the 2nd qualifier, e.g., ANACS-WN-3-1. In the 3rd edition we continue this practice with a minor expansion.

For example

- Bullion (Silver rounds) are "Ag" followed by the number of ounces
- A wooden nickel is "WN"
- A casino chip is "Chip"
- "Token", "SCD", etc.
- A medal is "Medal" or "Medal(CHN)" [new in the 3rd Edition] if its government made.

Varieties

One of the interesting findings during this work has been that many samples were issued using the same certificate number but multiple objects. This is especially noticeable in the NGC "brown label" Fifty State Quarters. In order to prevent the number of Schwager numbers from becoming absurd (and because it's difficult enough to collect all of them, not even every single tiny variety, I've added a suffix to the Schwager number. For different states, it's the state abbreviation (ME for Maine). For other small varieties it's .1, .2, etc.

For example NGC-025-4-37 the "John Maben Rare Coins" sample, used both Maine and Arkansas 50SQ. Thue we have NGC-025-4-37 for the cert# 022568-_ _ _ and two varieties: NGC-025-4-37.ME Maine 50SQ, -001 to -035 plus NGC-025-4-37.AR Arkansas 50SQ, -036 to -074.

[1] CAD is the ISO4127 code for the Canadian dollar, CAN is the ISO3166 Alpha-3 code for the country of Canada. Yes, Burton is well aware that Canada is not the US (he can name all of the Canadian provinces, he can't name all the US States because of traumatic amnesia). Keep up, it gets worse.

Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering

Probably the worse case we've found is NGC-5x025-4-3 the 5-coin "NGC COLLECTORS' SOCIETY" samples. Across 11 invoice numbers, we've found 532 sets were made. The last page of this document is the "tear sheet" (single page from the upcoming book), to show how we will be presenting this. That also leads into the next section:

Multi-Coin Holders

Marking of denomination for multi-coin holders are imperfect, but are either labeled 2x3, 001+005, or MULTI. We initially had this inverted, but the entries sort poorly. We also tried 3xCAN10c, but that sorts even worse. Thus the "rule" is

- left to right

OR

- clockwise from the coin closest to the right side of 12 o'clock

- [Country]denomination (x or +) …

Sorting is ordinary alphabetic, which is clearly imperfect, but anything else is worse. These sample are rare, and so we choose to live with sorting like this:

- PCGS-001+JPN1s-5-1 – the 1c US coin is on the left, so that's how it's presented and sorts with other US coins
- PCGS-001-4-1
- PCGS-001-5-1
- PCGS-001-5-2
- PCGS-005-4-1

- PCGS-CAN10c-9-1
- PCGS-CAN10cx3-9-1 – kind of ugly, at least it's where you look first, 5c, other 10c, 25c.
- PCGS-CAN25c-9-1
- PCGS-CAN5c-9-1

- PCGS-CHN1-9-1 – 1 Yuan before 1 Jaio is the common sort anyway
- PCGS-CHN1j+5j-9-1 – this would sort with other 1j coins but be sensitive to the multi-holder vs. label #.
- PCGS-CHN1j-9-1
- PCGS-CHN3-4-1
- PCGS-CHN3-5-1
- PCGS-CHN3-9-1
- PCGS-CHN3x2-5-1
- PCGS-CHN5f-9-1 – this is a nice accident, Fen before Jaio
- PCGS-CHN5j-9-1

CHN3x2 is "3 Yuan, 2 coins". As we see above, this sorts after the last single 3 Yuan sample. It's unfortunate, it would be better to sort it within the 3 Yuan then by Label type, but there's no easy way to force that.	

Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering

001+005 covers a "1¢ and 5¢" coin pair. It would sort after the last 1¢ coin.	
MULTI covers more complex cases e.g. 5 different denomination coins of or coins from two countries in the same holder This one could be 001+005+050+010+025 but that's really an artifact of the placement. MULTI makes them sort together at least	

Table 2 – Multiple Coin Holders

International sample numbering (3rd Edition)

In the 1st and 2nd edition, International samples were numbered using a code that reflected the country and denomination. When international samples were few, there were not a lot of collisions and confusion.

With the explosion in international samples, it became very hard to assign unambiguous ids. Is a C China? Or Canada?? For the 3rd edition, we've chosen to renumber international samples, but will offer an index of the renumbering.

Two International Standards have been turned to for clarity:

ISO 3166[2] is the international standard for country codes, defining an alpha-2 code (United States of America = US) and an alpha-3 code (United States of America = USA), which is more closely related to the country name. ISO3166 also references previously assigned values which makes some samples simpler to describe.

ISO 4217[3] is the international standard for currency codes. The official numbering agency maintains two lists, one of Current Currency & Funds, the other of *Historic Denominations*. These lists are available[4], but at least in 2022, the lists can't be downloaded in Microsoft Edge without some add-on. Firefox works fine.

Both standards are freely available if you jump through some minor hoops. For example, if you follow the links, you will be offered the ability to download the **ISO 3166** lists for a mere 300 Swiss Francs (but that does include all three subordinate standards!) Save your money: the less obvious "Full list of country codes" link takes you to a page which also allows download to say Excel or Google Sheets through the magic of copy and paste.

ISO 4217 is nice because it not only defines the unit of money, but also the standardized (albeit unnamed) minor unit. You might have to do some research to find the minor unit's name (cent or pfennig).

International samples are listed as

Service - **ISO3166alpha3code** + **Value** + **UnitOfMoney** - **Label** - **Sequence**

Service, **Label**, and **Sequence** have their Sample Slabs customary meanings:

- **Service** is the abbreviation or name of the slabbing company, ANACS or Blanchard, etc. It is followed by a dash.
- **Label** is the major grouping of labels for the service, e.g. 2 for the PCGS Doily.

---

[2] https://www.iso.org/iso-3166-country-codes.html and https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/
[3] https://www.iso.org/iso-4217-currency-codes.html
[4] https://www.six-group.com/en/products-services/financial-information/data-standards.html

Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering

- **Sequence** is the sequential number assigned to the **Service** - **ISO3166alpha3code** + **Value** + **UnitOfMoney** - **Label** – combination.

We will come back to the **ISO3166alpha3code** in a page or two (page 6) – it needs **UnitOfMoney** for context.

- **Value** is in whole numbers unless required. 1 pence, 0.5 pence, 10 Bhat, 500 Marks.

Unit of Money

UnitOfMoney is optional, but it serves three different and yet distinct purposes

SubordinateUnitOfMoney

This is a single letter in lower-case. We have observed 10 Bhat and 25 Satang samples from Thailand (**ISO 3166** Alpha-3 THI) where 100 Satang = 1 Bhat. These would be

-THI10- and -THI25s-

You could certainly call a 10 Bhat sample 1000s (10x100) but why?

A United Kingdom 10p *N for NHS* coin would be -GBR10p- while a pound coin would be -GBR1-.

If there is no name for the subordinate unit, then the decimal value is used, but with an underscore (_) instead of the decimal point, e.g. -MEXP0_05-[5].

HistoricalUnitOfMoney

This is a single letter in upper-case. Generally (although not technically valid) we use the same **ISO 3166** Alpha-3 codes as the current country.

Where there is a historical letter used instead of the first letter of the unit name, we use that. It's not s(shilling), p(pence), and f(farthing), it's s d f.

Examples from the 1700s and later of a 2 whatever coin:

Country	Unit	Minor unit	Alternate unit	Code	Meaning
Bolivia (Spanish Colonial)	Reale (Ag)[6]	None		-BOL2-	2 reales
			Escudo (Au) = 16 Reales	-BOL2E-	2 Escudo
Bolivia (1827-1863)	Sol	None		-BOL2-	2 Sol
			Peso = 8 Sol Scudo = 16 Sol	-BOL2P- -BOL2S-	2 Peso 2 Scudo
Bolivia (1864-1963)	Boliviano (1st)	Centésimos/ Centavos	None	-BOL1- -BOL2c-	1 Boliviano 2 Centésimos
Bolivia (1963-1986)	Peso Boliviano	Centavos	None	-BOL2- -BOL2c-	2 Peso 2 Centavos
Bolivia (1986-)	Boliviano (2nd)	Centavos	None	-BOL2- -BOL2c-	2 Boliviano 2 Centavos
Great Britain	Pound	Shilling, Pence, Farthing	Guinea = 21 Shilling[7]	-GBR2- -GBR2s- -GBR2d- -GBR2f- -GBR2G-	2 Pounds 2 Schilling 2 Pence 2 Farthing 2 Guinea

Table 3 - Some "2" unit coins

AlternateUnitOfMoney (AUOM)

This is also a single upper-case letter.

AUOM are frequently a higher value unit, such as the Escudo of Colonial Spain which was worth 16 reales.

AUOM can also be coins issued in the value of another country. An example of an alternate unit is the Somali fantasy guitar "coins"[8]. These are denominated in Dollars not Somali Shillings, so -SOM1D-.

---

[5] It's a file naming thing.
[6] In colonial Spanish possessions, the unit of money was the silver reale. The gold Escudo was an alternate unit for rich people.
[7] The Guinea was (in 1663) the gold equivalent of the 20 Shillings Pound Sterling (Silver). By 1694 it was worth 21 Shillings. Genteel bills were rendered in Guineas, with the Barrister or Auctioneer getting the Pound and the odd Shilling paid to underlings like clerks (don't call it a tip it was a legitimate part of their pay!).
[8] https://en.numista.com/catalogue/exonumia37131.html

Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering
ISO3166alpha3code

ISO3166alpha3code is simple for current countries. It gets more complex for historical entities. And, a word of warning: *International Standards often require you to believe impossible things to make sense of them.*

As an example Table 3 - Some "2" unit coins pretends that the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2022 is the same state as the Potosi Mint in the Territory of Charcas in the 1500s-1776 (under the authority of the Viceroy of Peru in Lima), and the Spanish Colonial province of Upper (Alto) Peru from 1776 to independence. Given the date, the units are unambiguous, and that's all that matters.

As a 2nd example, let us take some of the fairly common suite of German Sample slabs issued by NGC through their German branch, especially at the Berlin World Money Fair.

A little poking at **ISO 3166** gives us DEU for the Federal Republic of Germany with a minor note about "since reunification". Following that takes us to another page with DDR for East Germany (German Democratic Republic or Deutsche Demokratische Republik).

The "Impossible thing" you have to believe is a little Wikipedia-level history, that DEU is the direct successor to the German Empire (1919 and earlier), the German (Weimar) Republic (1919-1945), post-war (Occupied) Germany (1945-1949), the Federal Republic of Germany (1949-1990), and the (reunified) Federal Republic of Germany (1990-date). It's all in the same Wikipedia article[9] so it must be true, right?

We are numismatists, not historians, we'll get over it.

More poking, this time at **ISO 4217**

ENTITY	Currency	ISO 4127			Withdrawal Date	Effective Dates
		Alphabetic Code	Numeric Code	Minor unit		
GERMANY	Deutsche Mark	DEM	276	This isn't listed in ISO4217 but it's 100 pfennig = 1 Mark	2002-03	-1998
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	Mark der DDR	DDM	278		1990-07 to 1990-09	1949-1990
GERMANY	Euro	EUR	978	2	current	1999-

Table 4 - German coins (as an example)

And that gives us our codes:

Year	Denomination	Country	Currency	Minor	Code
1923	500 Mark[10]	German Republic	Deutsche Mark	Pfennig	-DEU500-
1960	1 Pfennig	East Germany	Mark der DDR	Pfennig	-DDR1p-
1995	1 Euro Cent	Germany	Euro	Cent	-DEU1c-
2002	20 Euro Cent	Germany	Euro	Cent	-DEU20c-

Table 5 - German Coin Codes

Afterward

I think this is minimally rational, sufficiently stable, and in use for the 3rd Edition. We can always change later.

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany_(disambiguation)

[10] Thanks to the magic of hyperinflation, a 1923 500M coin – the highest "value" Germany ever issued – was worth 7 US cents in January and nothing by November (well, it was quoted at 4.2 Trillion Marks to the USD).

Sample Slab Book, 3rd edition
Notes on Numbering

Cross Reference: **NGC-025-4-100**, see NGC-5x025-4-4

Catalog Number: **NGC-5x025-4-4** ③

Original Schwager Number NGC-025-4-100
Varieties: NGC-5x025-4-4.1 -001 to -295 (59 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.2 -001 to -200 (40 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.3 -001 to -295 (59 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.4 -001 to -205 (41 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.5 -001 to -295 (59 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.6 -001 to -295 (59 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.7 -001 to -295 (59 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.8 -001 to -295 (59 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.9 -001 to -190 (38 sets)
NGC-5x025-4-4.10 -001 to -295 (59 sets)

Object: Illinois, Alabama, Maine, Missouri, Arkansas - Fifty State quarter

Date: 2003-D

Grade: MS65

Serial: 1789612-(_ _ _ - _ _ _)

Label: In maroon border "NGC COLLECTORS' SOCIETY (dot) LIMITED EDITION"
Obv: 2003-D UNCIRCULATED SET
STATE QUARTERS

Shell: 5-port - This is a giant white insert slab with five ports, each of which can be sized to hold a different coin. (102.3mmH x 195.0mmW x 9.6mmT)

Pieces: 295 (59 sets) (NGC database)

Notes: NGC gave these out as spifs in 2003, these are nice examples of the seldom seen multi-port holder. This turns out to be a very popular sample with over 500 pieces made.

③ Also (our collections or seen on eBay or the NGC database), totaling 532 sets:

1755206-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 200 coins, (40 sets)
1789105-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 295 coins, (59 sets)
1789106-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 205 coins, (41 sets)
1791122-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 295 coins, (59 sets)
1795220-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 295 coins, (59 sets)
1795222-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 295 coins, (59 sets)
1795224-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 295 coins, (59 sets)
1795226-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 190 coins, (38 sets)
1831083-(_ _ _ - _ _ _): 295 coins, (59 sets)