ROSARIES WITH COINS
In the 17\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} century it was not uncommon to use coins as charms on the rosary. This custom seems to have been confined to the German language area of Western Europe. Below follow the descriptions.

SWABIAN/BAVARIAN ROSARIES WITH COINS
There is a special attribute that has been used to be attached to Bavarian rosaries: silver coins. In the book ‘500 Jahre Rosenkranz’ (ref. nr. 1), which served as a catalogue of 200 year old rosaries, three filigree rosaries are shown to which coins have been attached. For that purpose, a silver loop has been soldered to the coin. In fact, the coins are older than the rosaries as they date from the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century. The tradition to attach coins to a rosary is only seen in Germany, particularly the Southern part of Germany, and it is tempting to assume that it served another purpose than only making the rosary more attractive or expensive. In previous years I examined the coins of three such rosaries, 13 coins in total from the period 1642-1802. What was immediately obvious is, that the coins are not selected for their excellent state. On the contrary, the coins are often in a poor state with partly eroded surfaces, not surprising because silver is a relatively soft metal. In addition, the soldered loop reduces considerably the value of the coins. This shows, that it was probably not meant to increase the value of a rosary.

Three suggestions remain to explain the attaching of coins to a rosary. First, it may concern the material, because the coins are always made of silver, not of copper or gold. Silver belonged just like coral, ivory, bone and rock crystal, to the group of substances that were protective against evil spirits. A silver bullet or dagger was required to kill a vampire and silver was also effective against werewolves, witches and monsters. In this regard, it is well possible that attaching silver objects increased the protecting power of the rosary. Second, if you take such a rosary in hand, you can hear the tinkling of the coins against the glass or gemstone beads. In this respect it may mimic the function of a rattle, which in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century were used to repel bad spirits. In the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} century rattlers made of silver came into fashion and this seems exactly the period from which this tradition originated. As mentioned already, the rosaries with coins are probably from later times, but the idea to use coins to generate evil-
repelling sounds may go back to these centuries. Third, the images on the coins may have had a protective meaning or emission. Often the coins display complex abbreviations. For example, on one of the coins that I examined, there is the inscription:

LEOPOLDUS.D.G.R.I.S.A.G.H.B.REX, ARCHID.AUS.DUX.B.CO.TYR.

It stands for:

**Leopoldus Dei Gratia Romanorum Imperator Semper Augustus Germaniae Hungariae Bohemiae Rex Archidux Austriae Dux Burgundiae Comes Tyrolis.**

‘Leopold by the grace of God Emperor of the Romans, the ever-illustrious King of Germany, Hungary and Bohemia, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Count of Tirol.’

It concerns Leopold I as the sovereign of the Holy Roman Empire. Below is a **table giving information** about the coins that I was able to examine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sovereign</th>
<th>Lifetime</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1642</td>
<td>Ferdinand Charles</td>
<td>(1628-1662)</td>
<td>Archduke of Austria, Burgundy and Tirol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16??</td>
<td>Chistian von Liegnitz-Brieg</td>
<td>(1618-1672)</td>
<td>Duke of Silesia, Liegnitz, Brieg, Wohla and Ohlau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1677</td>
<td>Leopold I</td>
<td>(1640-1705)</td>
<td>Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1697</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>Louis XIV</td>
<td>(1638-1715)</td>
<td>King of France and Navarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>Francis I Stefanus</td>
<td>(1708-1765)</td>
<td>Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>Sigismund III von Schrattenbach</td>
<td>(1698-1698)</td>
<td>Archduke of Salzburg, Count of Schrattenbach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim</td>
<td>(1708-1779)</td>
<td>Prince-Bishop of Würzburg and Bamberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Charles I</td>
<td>(1713-1780)</td>
<td>Duke of Braunschweig, Lüneberg and Wolfenbüttel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>Maria Theresa</td>
<td>(1717-1780)</td>
<td>Empress of the Holy Roman Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>Charles William Ferdinand</td>
<td>(1735-1806)</td>
<td>Duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Prince of HRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Francis II</td>
<td>(1768-1835)</td>
<td>Last Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, First Emperor of Austria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the depicted sovereigns are members of the **house Habsburg**, a dynasty that ruled from the 16th till the 18th century over the **Holy Roman Empire and Spain**, and actually owned large regions of it. In fact, the **famous French King Louis XIV** can be regarded as closely linked to this dynasty, because his wife Maria Theresa was a half-sister of Charles II of Spain. However, in the period that the coins were in use, the power of the dynasty was on the wane. After the Thirty Year’s War that ended with the Treaty of Münster in 1648 between the Holy Roman Empire and France, the Empire was more a collection of small states over which the Emperor had only limited power. It is sometimes argued that the waning power of the Habsburg House was also due to a genetic defect, which caused a deformation of the face. As a consequence, the upper and lower jaw did not fit well resulting in poor capacity to communicate. This deformation can be seen on the images of the coins.

The last Emperor was Francis II, who exchanged his title for ‘Emperor of Austria’ when Napoleon Bonaparte of France forced the dissolution of the Holy Empire in 1806. One of the Roman rulers of that time was Charles William Ferdinand of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, present on the coin from 1791. He got wounded at the warfront and felt his end coming. Therefore, he begged Napoleon not to attack his state and let him die in peace on his own land. His request was in vain.

Part of the states that were assembled into the Holy Roman Empire were ecclesiastic properties. They were

*Seven decade Swabian/Bavarian rosary with six coins; the cross has been repaired with mother-of-pearl; first half of the 19th century.*
ruled by a bishop or archbishop who thus had both secular and divine power. Examples are Sigismund III von Schrattenbach (coin from 1754) and Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim (coin from 1764). The general assumption in that time was that rulers

_Six coins, or what is left of it, from the 16th and 17th century Holy Roman Empire; Front (left), back (right)._
obtained their power from God. That is why on most of the coins the letters D.G., Dei Gratia, follow the name of the ruler. They were ‘chosen’ people with divine power, including the power over life and death. Centuries ago sovereigns were also supposed to have a healing power. Rulers were able to heal people by laying a hand on them or through an amulet, which could be a coin or medal. Healing rituals were in use especially in the 17th century, but were still performed in the 19th century. It is said that the English King Charles II (1630-1685) treated no less than 92,000 subjects between 1661 and 1682. In that context, also on the images on coins some power was attributed. In England the ‘Angel coin’ was known with the image of Saint Michael killing the devilish dragon. As such, we can assume that also coins showing emperors or rulers of the Holy Roman Empire were supposed to have special powers and were therefore attached to the rosary. Altogether it can be said that there may have been up to three reasons for this Swabian-Bavarian custom to attach the coins: the power of silver, the tinkling sound, and the image of rulers with divine power.
ROSARIES WITH COINS FROM OTHER REGIONS
The custom to attach coins to rosaries seems not to have been confined to Swabia/Bavaria, but have been in use in neighbouring countries as well.

A ROSARY FROM THE BRAUNSCEIG-LÜNEBURG DUTCHY
In 2018 a rosary was added to the Mariman collection that dates from the early 18th century. It is composed of agate beads of different size and shape. The pendant has a credo-cross and ends with an encased ‘Agnus Dei’ of 4.5 x 5.5 cm. What an Agnus Dei actually is, can best be explained by using the description in the Catholic Encyclopedia (www.newadvent.org/cathen/01220a.htm).

The name Agnus Dei has been given to oval or round discs of wax impressed with the figure of a lamb ['agnus' is Latin for 'lamb', Agnus Dei = Lamb of God] and blessed at stated seasons by the Pope. The lamb usually bears a cross or flag, while figures of saints or the name and arms of the Pope are commonly impressed on the reverse. The blessing of the Agnus Dei stems from the first millennium and was probably introduced to replace pagan holy items. From the time of Amalarius (c. 820) onwards there is frequent mention of the use of Agnus Deis. At a later period they were often sent by the Popes as presents to sovereigns and distinguished personages.

In the ninth century the archdeacon manufactured the Agnus Deis early on Holy Saturday morning out of clean wax mixed with chrism. The Agnus Deis were distributed...
by him to the people on the Saturday following (Sabbato in Albis). At a later date the Pope himself generally assisted at both the blessing and the distribution.

The great consecration of Agnus Deis takes place only in the first year of each pontificate and every seventh year afterwards. The discs of wax are now prepared beforehand by certain monks, and without the use of chrism. It has been stated that the wax is derived from the paschal candles of the seven former years. On the Wednesday of Easter week these discs are brought to the Pope, who dips them into a vessel of water mixed with chrism and balsam, adding various consecratory prayers. The distribution takes place with solemnity on the Saturday following, when the Pope, after the "Agnus Dei" of the Mass, puts a packet of Agnus Deis into the inverted mitre of each cardinal and bishop who comes up to receive them.

The purpose of these consecrated medallions is to protect those who wear or possess them from all malign influences. In the prayers of blessing, special mention is made of the perils from storm and pestilence, from fire and flood, and also of the dangers to which women are exposed in childbirth. The manufacture of counterfeits, and even the painting and ornamentation of genuine Agnus Deis, has been strictly prohibited by various papal bulls.

The Agnus Dei of the present rosary was originally covered by mica to protect it, but over time the mica has been broken. Nevertheless, the...
lamb and flag are still visible and on the reverse side the Virgin Mary seems to have been impressed with the Child Jesus on her left arm.

This rosary also carries an attribute in the middle of each of the decades and at the centre. Three of these attributes are silver coins dating from 1645, 1689 and 1692, respectively. The oldest coin cannot be identified, but the other two refer to **Ernst August Duke of Braunsweig-Lüneburg** (1629-1698). He became Bishop of Osnabrück in 1662. After the death of his brother Johan Friedrich, in 1679 he entered the government of the principality Calenberg and Hannover. He supported Emperor Leopold I by sending troops and probably out of appreciation he was raised to the rank of Elector of the Holy Roman Empire on 19 December 1692.

Remarkably, one of the coins is dated 1689, when he was ten years the sovereign of Calenberg. The other coin is exactly from the year that he was raised to Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, 1692. It seems therefore that these coins are referring to important events in the life of Ernst August. It may well be that the oldest coin from 1645, when he was 16 years old, also refers to a special event. Taking together the fact that in that time he as a Prince-Bishop would have received the Agnus Dei, the fact that the beads were made of polished agate, and the commemorative coins, it is likely that this rosary belonged to the family of Ernst August von Braunschweig-Lüneburg. It may have been composed to his honour shortly after his death.

The other four attributes can best be described by using translations from the text in the book of G. Mori ‘Rosenkränze Sammeln – Beten – Mythos’ (ref. nr. 9).

**Neidfeige**: presented as fist, made from various materials, most from metal but also from hardwood. They are still being sold from all kinds of metals. Value (2010) is 50-350 Euros.

**Sebastianspfeile**: Arrow of St. Sebastian: Hanger in the form of an arrow, in memory of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian. Exists in all kinds of metals and from wax since the 15th century. It protects against contagious diseases. In Ebersberg the faithful can
still get an Arrow of St. Sebastian on 20 January in the parish church after the Mass. Value is 10-150 Euros.

**Salzteig-Tonfigürchen**, Salt-dough - Clay figurine: Madonna or Saint, often St. Antonius Abt. Pilgrims bought these clear or dark figurines mostly during their pilgrimage, because at a place of pilgrimage there was also dust mixed to the dough or clay, which was taken from the devoted statue. In case of sickness a tiny bit was scraped off from the statue and used as medicine, equally for humans or animals. Value is 100-250 Euros.

The **fourth hanger** cannot be identified, but it seems a very small piece of wood, possibly also from a sacred statue, encased in a silver casket.
THE ROSARY OF BEROMÜNSTER

In the Mariman collection is a chaplet which has a pendant resembling a Thaler from Beromünster, nowadays a small village in the Swiss district Sursee in the Canton Lucerne. Since the 15th century Beromünster is known for its yearly procession, when the priest followed by locals on horseback carrying the Holy Sacrament rides through the environment in order to bless the fields.

The medal just as the genuine coin shows at the front side a coat of arms with a helmet on top and surrounded by floral decorations with the inscription ‘Funda - Eccl:Bero - 720 - Berocom:de - Lenzb:’. At the reverse side, St. Michael is slaying the dragon with the inscription ‘Colleg:Bero – Suis – Benev:D:D:’. Also some small abbreviations are seen: HU. PB. Information about this coin can be found in an old book entitled ‘Thaler Kabinet, Wien 1846’.

Here follows a translation from my hand of the German text:


Das Wappen in einer behelmten, mit einem Palm- und einem Lorbeerzweige befleckten, auch einem kleinen Blumengewinde behängten Cartouche.


HU(lmericus) BP. (Bruppacher ?)


Here follows a translation from my hand of the German text:

THE RULERS OF BERO FROM LENZBURG, FOUNDER OF THE PARISH BERO IN 720

The coat of arms with helmet, with a cartridge covered by a palm- and laurel, and decorated with a garland.
THE MUNICIPALITY BERO HAS GIVEN THIS FREE OF CHARGE TO TAKE HOME

Saint Michael, facing towards the front, but the face more seen from the right side, slings with his right hand thunderbolts at the dragon below him, and holds in his left arm a shield, on which is written in three lines Quis Ut Deus [who is like God], with his right foot the Saint stands on the head and with his left foot on the neck of the monster, above and below the inscription at the shield is a small star.

Possible maker: Huldericus Bruppacher (?)

Then an explanation concerning this type of coins is provided:

The hamlet Münster or ‘Beromünster’ was obliged to send yearly forty of these commemorative coins to the government in Luzern, for protection and safety, as well as to the tax-collector. They were also given to the papal Nuntius in gold or silver, when he visited Beromünster. Further, every year a certain number was attributed to cover school costs [?], and they were given to foreign

Beromünster Chaplet; pendant ending with a silver medal identical to a St. Michael’s Coin with a value of ½ Thaler; silver capped Paters and charm; 19th century.
musicians who arrived at St. Michael’s Day. Usually they are referred to as ‘Michael’s coins’.

The coin-resembling medal of the pendant is a ½ Thaler, which is 34 mm in diameter and contains 14.3 gram silver. It dates from the middle of the 18th century. After all, maybe a musician from Swabia/Bavaria received this coin at St. Michael’s Day, took it home and had it turned into a medal that could be hung onto a special rosary. The silver metal and the image of St Michael slaying the dragon will have provided protection against evil spirits. As such, it resembles the English ‘Angel coin’ mentioned in the section of Swabian/Bavarian rosaries with coins.

Remarkably, the rim around the medal seems not to be separately attached to a coin, but rather the medal has been casted including the rim, for which a coin has been used as a mould.

A SIMILAR ROSARY OF EINSIEDELN
The above rosary was offered in 2018 by a seller from Neu-Ulm, a city in Bavaria about 80 km from Augsburg. In 2019 a rosary with a similar make-up was offered by a seller from Stadtbergen, only a few kilometres from Augsburg. This rosary also seems to originate from the 19th century. Although the beads and medal are smaller and it contains a credo-cross, the overall composition of these rosaries is the same. The Our Father beads are double capped, a ring forms the centrepiece to which the chain and the pendant are attached, a ring is used to attach the medal to the pendant. In both

Sold for $80. This amount does not include the buyer’s fee.

This 18th century medal seems to have been used as a mould for the rimmed medal of the Chaplet of Einsiedeln shown below.
rosaries, the outer rim is an inherent part of the medal, but it resembles a frame that in the 18th century and before was used to clip coins or medals and provide a way to hang it on a chain or rosary. Also the charm is similar, but not identical. The front of the medal shows the Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus with the inscription ‘S. Maria – Einsidl’, Holy Mary – Einsiedeln. It refers to an old and famous place of pilgrimage in Switzerland about 50 kilometers south of Zürich. The reverse side shows St. Michael driving the devil out of Heaven and has the inscription ‘Constitui Te Feincifem’. At the moment it is not clear what these words exactly mean, but the motif is the same as on the reverse side of the Beromünster Chaplet medal. Just as the medal of the
Beromünster Chaplet resembles a genuine coin from older times, the design of the medal of the Einsiedeln Chaplet resembles a genuine medal from older times. On the internet a report can be found concerning the sale at auction of a similar medal from the 18th century.

This observation indicates that in the 19th century chaplets were made in Bavaria or Switzerland using old coins and medals as a mould to cast new medals with a rim, that should make them look like 18th century medals. They were made for the Swiss market. Bavaria and the region near Augsburg is a likely place of production of these chaplets. Besides the makers of Filigree Rosaries (Chapters 15-17) it is known that other types of rosaries were made in Bavaria as well. This is for instance revealed by a short section of a book of which the eighth volume was issued in 1781. This work describes different types of manufacture in Germany and Switzerland. An original section concerning the production of rosaries by a rosary maker in Altmünster at some 20 kilometers from Augsburg, follows below together with a translation.


Sonders grgssl. Hochgehrter Herr Herr u. Johann Haihele u. Most honerable Mister Johann Haihele,
Mues dem Herrn einsmall Etwas von geweihten Rosenkrenzen Iberschickhen,  
wird der Herr kain Verdruss haben, das ich dem Herrn so lang nichts geschickt  
habe, hoffe, Es wird der Herr mit mir dannoch zu friden werden, schikhe dem  
Herrn schon ein rechte saubere Wahr und alle geweiht, 150 duzet braune, und  
125 duzet klaine caffe farb, und 50 duzet schwarze, zusammen 325 duzet; das  
hundert vor 2 fl. 45 X.: wie allemall. Machen 12 fl. 11 X.: wan der Herr was  
mehres verlangt, will ich dem Herrn dienen, und ein rechte Wahr schickhen, ich  
vermein Ist eine rechte Wahr, dessen Empfelche ich mich a dj. Den 24 Marti  
anno 1786.

Casspar Betuello  
Petter Macher in  
Altomünster u.

An dem grossgssl. Hochgeehrter  
Herrn Johann Haihele  
in Augsspurg sambt ein Packh  
mit geweihten Rosenkrenzen  
einzuhendigen,  
Franco,  
In Augsspurg.

Wenn auch dieser Brief nicht schon seiner sonderbaren Naivetät willen, welche  
manchem Leser einiges Lächeln abnöthigen wird, den Abdruck verdiente; so können  
dadurch vielleicht einige christkatholische betensbedürfige Seelen zu Hrn. Johann  
Haihele in Augsburg gewiesen werden, der sie, wie man siehet, um gar civillen Preis  
bedienen kann, und wie der Industrie der ehrlichen Kaspar Betuello vielleicht ein  
Vortheil daraus erwachsen, der so wohlfeit arbeiten, als man es kaum denken sollte.  
Man überlege nur: er liefert 325 Dutzend Beter Kaffefarb braun un d schwarz, en gros,  
für 12 fl. 11 Xr., noch dazu franko Augsburg, und noch dazu inclusive der Weihe, die  
doch auch ihr Geld werth ist. Altomünster, wo diese wohlfeite Betermacher wohnt, ist  
ein kleiner Marktflecken in Baiern, fünf Meilen von Augburg, ohnweit Aichach. Er gehört  
dem daselbst befindlichen Frauenkloster, vom Orden der heil. Brigitta. Ob die  
Rosenkranze etwa von den schönen Händen der Nonnen geweiht werden, oder ob  
der ehrwürdige P. Beichtvater, welcher diese frommen Schäflein weidet, diese Mühe  
über sich nimmt, ist mir nicht bewusst.

Description of a journey through Germany and Switzerland in the year 1781,  
including remarks about knowledge, industry, religion and traditions, by Friedrich  
Nicolai, Eighth Volume. Berlin and Stettin 1871

The continuous praying in the Catholic world has led to a special industry in Augsburg:  
namely the production of rosaries, or beads that are strung together on a thread, by  
which the Catholics dedicate many Hail Maries to the Virgin Mary and not so many Our  
Fathers to God. Such a thing is by the ordinary people in Bavaria referred to as: a  
‘Beter’ (an instrument used to pray, as well as one which invites to pray), and because  
the pronunciation is harsh it is called a ‘Petter’. And the rosary maker is called a
'Pettermacher’. Several persons in Augsburg have this occupation and of course there is also a lively trade of rosaries, which are made outside of Augsburg, which follow approximately the same route as the trade of religious statues. The unknown correspondent in Augsburg, who I mentioned already several times, has sent me an original letter from a Pettermacher in Bavaria to a merchant in Augsburg. It is literally as follows:

Some time ago I had to send you, Sir, some of the blessed rosaries but you, Sir, should not be annoyed that I have not sent you, Sir, anything for so long time and I hope that you, Sir, still will be content about me, when I send you, Sir, now a truly perfect merchandise and all blessed, 150 dozen brown, and 125 dozen coffee-colour, and 50 dozen black, altogether 325 dozen; per one hundred for 2 florins and 45 groschen: all this makes 12 florins 11 groschen: if you, Sir, wishes something more, then I will serve you, Sir, and send you perfect merchandise, I do mean perfect merchandise which I recommend. 24 March of the year 1786.

Casspar Betuello
Petter Macher in
Altomünster

This letter should be handed to
the most honorable Mister Johann Haihele
in Augsburg together with a package
with blessed rosaries,
franco (without charge),
in Augsburg.

If this letter does not already demonstrate its profound silliness, which will make various readers laugh about it, then perhaps because of this some Christian-Catholic souls can be referred to Mr. Johann Haihele in Augsburg who can, as we can see, serve them for a really acceptable price, and they can perhaps make a profit out of it like the production of the honest Kaspar Betuello, who works so cheap as one can hardly imagine. Just think: he delivers 325 dozen Beter with coffee-colour, brown or black, in total for 12 florins and 11 groschen, and in addition without charge sent to Augsburg, and in addition the blessing, which is also worth its money. Altomünster, where this cheap Betermacher lives, is just a small market spot in Bavaria, five miles from Augsburg, not far from Aichach. It belongs to the women’s monastery in that place, of the Order of Saint Brigitta. Whether the rosaries were blessed by the nice hands of the nuns, or if the honorable Father Confessor, who cares this devoted flock of sheep, takes this task upon him, I do not know.