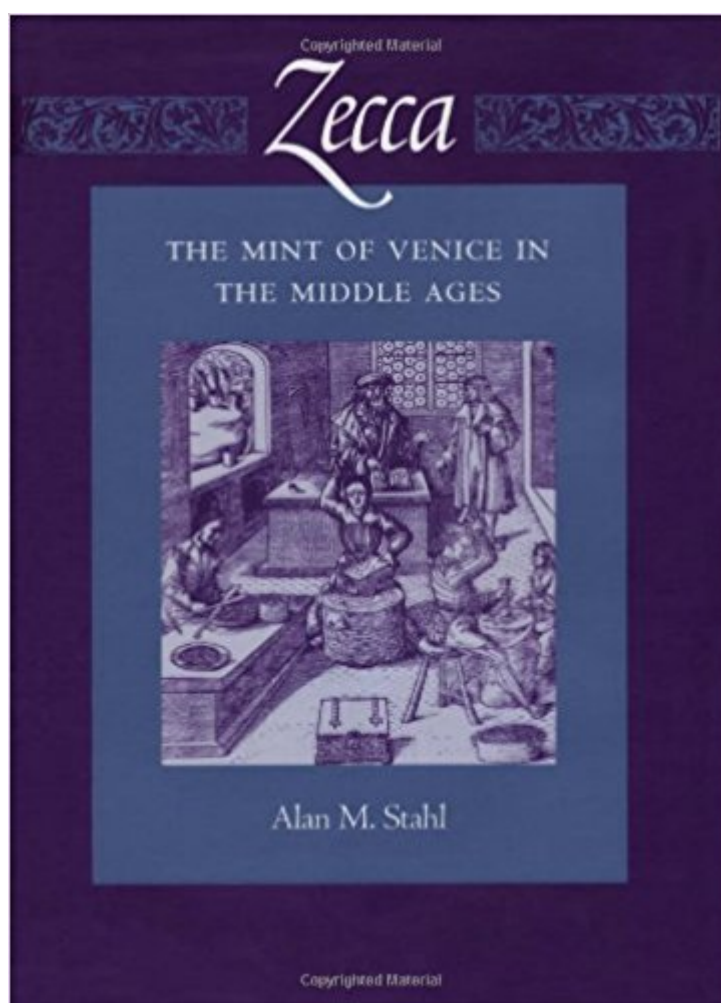




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# **Zecca: The Mint Of Venice In The Middle Ages (Published In Association With The American Numismatic Society)**



## Synopsis

Within a few months of assuming the position of curator of medieval coins at the American Numismatic Society in 1980, Alan M. Stahl was presented with a plastic bag containing a hoard of 5,000 recently discovered coins, most of which turned out to be from medieval Venice. The course of study of that hoard (and a later one containing more than 14,000 coins) led him to the Venetian archives, where he examined thousands of unpublished manuscripts. To provide an even more accurate account of how the Zecca mint operated in Venice in the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, Stahl commissioned scientific analyses of the coins using a variety of modern techniques, uncovering information about their content and how they had been manufactured. The resulting book, *Zecca: The Mint of Venice in the Middle Ages*, is the first to examine the workings of a premodern mint using extensive research in original documents as well as detailed study of the coins themselves. The first of the book's three sections traces the coinage of Venice from its origins in the ninth century as a minor, and unofficial, regional Italian coinage to its position at the dawn of the Renaissance as the dominant currency of Mediterranean trade. The second section, entitled "The Mint in the Life of Medieval Venice," illustrates the mechanisms of the control of bullion and the strategies for mint profit and explores the mint's role in Venetian trade and the emergence of a bureaucratized government. The third section, "Within the Mint," examines the physical operations that transformed raw bullion into coins and identifies the personnel of the mint, situating the holders of each position in the context of their social and professional backgrounds. Illustrated with photos of Venetian coinage from the world's major collections, *Zecca* also includes a listing of all holders of offices related to the medieval Venetian mint and summaries of all major finds of medieval Venetian coins.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Stahl brings the medieval mint to life... This is a book of enormous importance not only for the history of Venice but also for medieval numismatic history in general." (Thomas F. Madden *American Historical Review*) "Stahl's very intelligent organization allows one to dip into this nearly encyclopedic work for material on a wide range of matters in economic, social, political and numismatic history. His command of secondary studies allows for a reliable synthesis of these, while his extensive archival research provides him both a critical stance and ample material for exploring his own interests." (Joseph P. Byrne *Renaissance Quarterly*) "Extremely well written... Future research on mints and minting in Italy during the Middle Ages, and indeed throughout Europe, will have to take this book into account. Stahl has set a challenging standard to follow." (William R. Day, Jr. *Speculum*) "Stahl's experience as a numismatist is evident as he blends a discussion of medieval metallurgy with modern scientific techniques and statistical analysis to reveal previously unknown information about the composition of the coins and the volume of coinage produced... A well-rounded and well-documented history of this crucial Venetian institution." (Holly S. Hurlburt *Technology and Culture*) "Worthy for any scholar working on either pre-modern minting or Venetian History... an enduring contribution." (Yadira Gonzalez de Lara *Journal of Economic History*) "One of the very best monographs in numismatic and monetary history, and certainly in numismatics, that I have ever read. Along with being exceptionally well researched and documented, the book is also very well written, and indeed a pleasure to read." (John Munro *Medieval Prosopography*) "This book is the most penetrating study yet written of any mint in late medieval Europe, and has particular importance because of the sheer size of the Venetian mint, one of the largest in Europe. Alan Stahl's work admirably complements the volumes by Frederic Lane and Reinhold Mueller on money and banking in medieval Venice. Zecca crowns twenty years of distinguished work in the Venetian archives. All future studies of medieval mints will have to take account of what he has written." (Peter Spufford, *Queens' College, University of Cambridge*) "This is an important work of solid scholarship that sheds new light on the Venetian mint as an institution. Stahl makes good use of numismatics. He also emphasizes people in a detailed manner. This not only enlivens the book by bringing to life bullion merchants and mint officials, but also sharpens our

understanding of these important economic actors." (François R. Velde, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago)

Alan M. Stahl served for twenty years as the curator of medieval coins for the American Numismatic Society, and is currently a visiting professor in the department of history at the University of Michigan. His previous books include *The Merovingian Coinage of the Region of Metz* and *The Venetian Torneseello: A Medieval Colonial Coinage*.

*Zecca* is an impressively researched historical work focusing adeptly on its subject: the Venetian mint in the middle ages. The narrative is very readable and the presentation uses footnotes to annotate the voluminous amount of source material that went into the creation of this work. The book focuses first on the coinage itself, the medieval penny, the grosso, the ducat, and finally the soldino. Each era goes into great detail on the weights, the fineness, and the people making the decisions to have the coins made. The book then goes back and examines each of the roles of the mint employees in additional detail. From the mintmasters and engravers to the smiths and weighers the duties of each position are laid out. In addition salaries and legal documents help flesh out some of the actual persons and the work done at the mint. The book left me with a thirst for more knowledge about Venice's history. There is little background in the book on some of the external reasons that caused some of the decisions presented in the work. I think this is definitely a must read for those people who have a strong interest in both history and numismatics. It is not so well suited for the casual reader who will undoubtedly get bored by the finer details of how many pennies are in a mark, and which minor noble filled the role of mintmaster. But if the reader is interested in medieval coinage, even if it is not Italian, then this work will provide a ton of insightful information on mint practices and medieval monetary policy.

IT'S ABOUT MY FAMILY...GREAT....

Excellent

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