



AMERICAN
NUMISMATIC
SOCIETY
PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, November 3, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY UNVEILS ARCHER: A BREAKTHROUGH IN ARCHIVAL CATALOGING

New York, NY - American Numismatic Society today unveiled the new interactive ANS archival search tool, ARCHER (numismatics.org/archives/). ARCHER (ARCHival Electronic Resource) provides access to the ANS' unrivalled collection of unique archival material, through a series of simple search screens.

ARCHER is powered by EADitor, open source software developed by the ANS for creating, managing, and publishing collections of archival finding aids described in Encoded Archival Description (EAD) XML. Like the society's Collection database, MANTIS, ARCHER's public interface includes faceted searching and mapping of the collection. The administrative interface takes advantage of XForms, next-generation web forms, which enables the Society's archivist, David Hill, to create the finding aids with an intuitive user interface that requires no technical knowledge of XML, a major advancement over many institutions' current workflows.

"The Society's archives contains a rich diversity of material", notes Deputy Director Andrew Meadows. "On the one hand there are the Society's own archival records, spanning more than 150 years of our activity since 1858. As such, the archive is one of the oldest held by any learned society in the country. But in addition to that, the ANS also holds a remarkable archive of international significance, consisting of the papers of famous scholars, collectors and dealers in the field of numismatics. Documents, letters, notebooks and photographs relating to many famous individuals from within the numismatic community and beyond are held at the ANS. ARCHER provides a remarkably straightforward tool both for their cataloging, and for their search by the general public."

The search interface is built on similar technology to the Society's MANTIS database. Simple faceted searching based on personal names, places, dates, genre and Library of Congress subject headings are all provided. ARCHER also provides a map interface, which will allow users to visualize the places on the globe with relevant ANS archival material.

ANS Archivist David Hill explains, "What really sets ARCHER apart from other archives management systems is that it combines a simple method for the creation of full EAD with a powerful, built-in publishing feature that produces remarkably sophisticated finding aids. The faceted search capabilities give us an enhanced level of control over our archival holdings,



AMERICAN
NUMISMATIC
SOCIETY
PRESS RELEASE

ensuring that ANS staff and researchers can always find relevant materials from across our various collections.”

The design of ARCHER is the work of ANS Web Developer Ethan Gruber, working in close collaboration with David Hill. The database supports a variety of export formats that will encourage exploration of the links between numismatics and other disciplines. As with MANTIS, underlying this work is a technical approach called ‘Linked Open Data’. For the future this will mean increased opportunities both for the ANS to integrate searches across the whole range of its collections, such as books, coins, archives, and also for the rest of the world wide web to discover and link to our material. As Meadows notes, “The new suite of ANS search tools, comprising DONUM (the library catalog), MANTIS and ARCHER, will bring numismatic material to whole new audiences. In this the ANS is leading the world.”

For more information, contact ANS Deputy Director Andrew Meadows (212) 571-4470 ext. 111, meadows@numismatics.org.

The American Numismatic Society, organized in 1858 and incorporated in 1865 in New York State, operates as a research museum under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is recognized as a publicly supported organization under section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) as confirmed on November 1, 1970.

American Numismatic Society
75 Varick St., Floor 11, New York, NY 10013
Tel: (212) 571-4470 Fax: 212-571-4479
www.numismatics.org