

Anabaptist or Munster, Germany talers, 1534

post by talerman, Cointalk March 27th, 2020

<https://www.cointalk.com/threads/coins-and-history.287921/page-7#post-4290262>

Meanwhile, further north religious conflicts between the new Protestant movements and Catholics were in full swing in Germany. In 1534 one radical sect, the Anabaptists took over the city of Münster, then under the [Prince-Bishop of Münster](#)

In the early 1530s a group of Anabaptists had gained considerable influence, through the adhesion of [Bernhard Rothmann](#), the [Lutheran](#) pastor, and several prominent citizens; and the leaders, [Jan Matthys](#) (also spelled Matthijs, Mathijsz, Matthyssen, Mathyszoon), a baker from [Haarlem](#), and [Jan Bockelson](#) (or Beukelszoon), a tailor from [Leiden](#). [Bernhard Rothmann](#) was a tireless and vitriolic opponent of Catholicism and a writer of pamphlets that were published by his ally and wealthy wool merchant [Bernhard Knipperdolling](#). The pamphlets at first denounced Catholicism from a radical Lutheran perspective, but soon started to proclaim that the [Bible](#) called for the absolute equality of man in all matters including the distribution of wealth. The pamphlets, which were distributed throughout northern Germany, successfully called upon the poor of the region to join the citizens of Münster to share the wealth of the town and benefit spiritually from being [the elect](#) of Heaven.

With so many adherents in the town, at the elections for the magistracy, Rothmann and his allies had little difficulty in obtaining possession of the town, seizing the city hall and placing Bernhard Knipperdolling as the mayor in February 1534, after deposing the mainly Lutheran magistrates, who, until then, had seen him as an ally in their own distrust of, and dislike for, Catholics. Matthys was a follower of [Melchior Hoffman](#), who, after Hoffman's imprisonment at Strasbourg, obtained a considerable following in the [Low Countries](#), including Bockelson, who became known as [John of Leiden](#). John of Leiden and Gerrit Boekbinder had visited Münster, and returned with a report that Bernhard Rothmann was there teaching doctrines similar to their own. Matthys identified Münster as the "[New Jerusalem](#)", and on January 5, 1534, a number of his disciples entered the city and introduced [adult baptism](#). Rothmann apparently accepted "rebaptism" that day, and well over 1000 adults were soon baptized. Vigorous preparations were made, not only to hold what had been gained, but to spread their beliefs to other areas. The many Lutherans who left were outnumbered by the arriving Anabaptists, there was an orgy of [iconoclasm](#) in cathedrals and monasteries, and rebaptism became compulsory. The property of the emigrants was shared

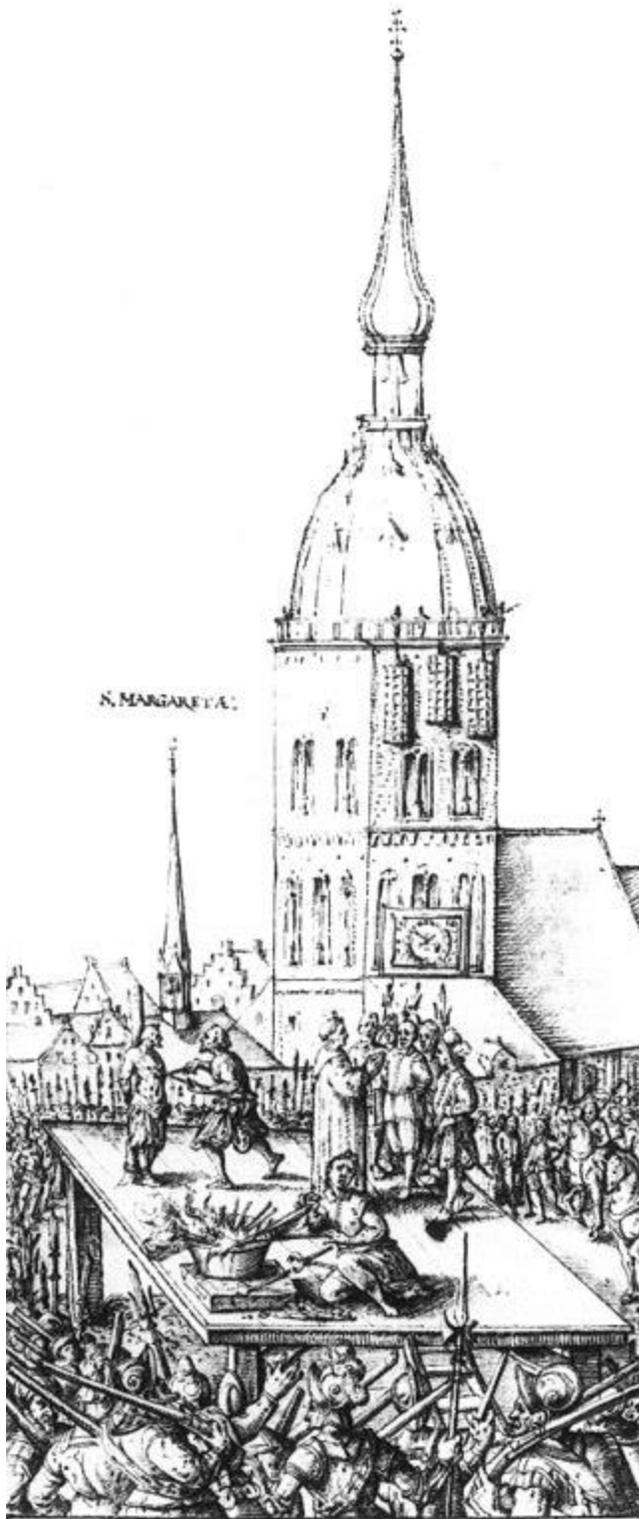
out with the poor and soon a proclamation was issued that all property was to be held in common.

The city was then besieged by [Franz von Waldeck](#), its expelled [bishop](#). In April 1534 on [Easter Sunday](#), Matthys, who had prophesied God's judgment to come on the wicked on that day, made a sally forth with only twelve followers, believing that he was a second [Gideon](#), and was cut off with his entire band. He was killed, his head severed and placed on a pole for all in the city to see, and his genitals nailed to the city gate.

The 25-year-old John of Leiden was subsequently recognized as Matthys' religious and political successor, justifying his authority and actions by the receipt of visions from heaven. His authority grew, eventually proclaiming himself to be the successor of [David](#) and adopting royal regalia, honors and absolute power in the new "[Zion](#)". There were at least three times as many women of marriageable age as men now in the town and he made [polygamy](#) compulsory and himself took sixteen wives. (John is said to have beheaded [Elisabeth Wandscherer](#) in the marketplace for refusing to marry him; this act might have been falsely attributed to him after his death.) Meanwhile, most of the residents of Münster were starving as a result of the year-long siege.

After lengthy resistance, the city was taken by the besiegers on June 24, 1535 and John of Leiden and several other prominent Anabaptist leaders were captured and imprisoned. In January 1536 John of Leiden, Bernhard Knipperdolling and one more prominent follower, [Bernhard Krechting](#), were tortured and executed in the marketplace of Münster. Their bodies were exhibited in cages, which hung from the steeple of [St. Lambert's Church](#). The bones were removed later, but the cages hang there still. (Wikipedia).

S. LAMBERT.



S. MARGARETA.

Bischof Strauch erodert Adigster Darinnen die Niederstücker
Johann von Kellen, Bernhards Kumpffollma, und Herr Bernhart
tong, mit ihrer mistat in den die wird Hingerichtet. Und Sonten
in den rad entlich, an S. LAMBERT. Thum in eigin Herrsch de
Knecht werden. 1573. 10. 10. 12

Historical drawing of the execution of the leaders of the rebellion. In the background the cages are already in place at the old steeple of St. Lambert's church

The Anabaptists struck coins during their brief rule (1534-35). They favored phrases from the Bible over portraits or coats of arms. Here is a 2 Taler struck in 1534.

Obv.: WE.NICHT.GEBORE.IS.VTH.DE.WAT.VN.GEIS'.MAC.NICH who has not been baptised will not be saved). * In circle

/DAT.WOR./T.IS.FLEISCH/GE.WORDEN/.VN.VANET*/.IN*VNS*/**/* (the word has become flesh and lives within us)

Rev. IN.GAEN.INT.RIKE.GADES.EIN.KININCK.VPREG.OV'ALd's empire with one king stands above all) crossed swords Inner

legend: EIN.GODT.EIN.GELOVE.EIN.DOEPE* (one God,one faith,one baptism) In circle in centre: 1554 over shield with THO/MVNS/TER





51.52 g. It is slightly underweight for a 2 Taler and is sometimes called a 1 3/4 Taler. 47 mm diameter.

They never struck minors, just 2 slightly different Talers, a 1 1/2 Taler and this 2 Taler. This coin is considered to be original but most coins which appear in the market are later restrikes, some by the goldsmith J. Potthoff (+1607) with a small P on the reverse, some by the Münster mintmaster Engelbert Ketteler in the 1640's with a small K on the reverse but others unsigned. Some may have been struck as souvenirs for delegates to the Peace Conference in Münster in 1648 leading up to the Treaties of Westphalia ending the 30 Years' War. Restrikes include a 54.38 g 2 Taler, a 44 g 1 1/2 Taler and a 16.48 g Half Taler as well as numerous Talers.