

Counterfeit toonie sells for nearly \$150 on eBay

By Jesse Robitaille

A counterfeit 2002 \$2 circulation coin with an apparent misaligned core has sold on eBay for \$144.

It's described as a "great coin" by its Canada-based seller, who has a 100 per cent positive feedback rating on the popular online marketplace. Its reverse, however, features some of the tell-tale markers identified by counterfeit coin expert Mike Marshall and other collectors since last fall, when fake toonies started appearing across the country ("Surge of suspected fakes hits cities across Canada since fall, collector finds," CCN Vol. 59 #1).

"(It's the) only one I have seen with (a) large die crack reverse going from the two across (the) core to the 'S' and (a) nice indent strike," reads the seller's description, which adds there is a "no questions asked return policy."

The fake appears to have been unknowingly sold and purchased as genuine on March 18, when a single bidder paid \$144.



A fake \$2 coin recently sold on eBay for \$144 features an incorrect front-right paw (enlarged at left) on the reverse polar bear. Photo via eBay.

Of the tens of thousands of coins checked by Marshall, several examples have obverse die cracks and two examples have "retained broken dies" on the reverse, he told CCN this March.

"The crack starts at the rim, comes down through the de-

VICES – or the legend in this case – moves across to the letter beside it and then back up to the rim again," Marshall said, adding that die "is not long for this world."

As mentioned, the mostly realistic-looking fakes have a

noticeable flaw in the polar bear's right paw, which includes a deep split in the middle – something also found on the coin recently sold on eBay.

Genuine \$2 coins have a less pronounced separation between the paw's middle toes.

The suspected fakes are also incorrectly weighted and sometimes have an oily appearance compared to genuine examples.

Aside from the numismatic ramifications, the public's trust in coinage could also falter if circulation coins are widely counterfeited, Marshall told CCN in May.

"There have been no official warnings other than articles I've been involved in, and no authorities are speaking out, so it's the little guy – the small businesses – that are getting screwed."

Still collecting data with other collectors across the country, Marshall said he most recently found 18 fakes among 75 coins – nearly 25 per cent – from three rolls he withdrew at his local bank on May 3.

Another collector, Marshall added, also withdrew a full roll from a bank in Markham, Ont., in late April.

"If it was a \$5 or a \$10 bill, there would have been warnings flashed all over TV, all over social media – everything," he said, comparing it to the media alerts issued by police when counterfeit banknotes are reported.

Marshall also believes some banks have begun inspecting deposited \$2 coins for counterfeits.

On May 4, a St. Catharines collector visited Marshall in Trenton, where he deposited two boxes, each with 20 coin rolls, into his account.

"They opened every roll right in front of him and searched every roll looking for counterfeits. Then they deposited them and told him they have none for sale because they have to search them all," Marshall told CCN.

"What really enrages me is there was no mention of this from the authorities." ❄️

Janus...

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of the republic; however, a denarius issued in 119 BCE by the moneyer M. Furius Philus (the son of Lucius) commemorating a Roman military victory in Gaul shows the head of Janus along with the legend "M FOVRI L F" on its obverse. The reverse depicts the city

goddess Roma crowning a trophy, the name "ROMA" to the right and "PHILI" in the exergue.

In 114 or 113 BCE, the moneyer C. Fonteius struck a denarius with a beardless janiform head of the Dioscuri, the heavenly twins Castor and Pollux on the obverse, and a galley on the reverse.

The same economic woes caused by the war with Car-

thage resulted in a series of reductions in the weight of the bronze to the point where instead of being cast, they were able to be struck with dies.

By 211 BCE, the aes grave coins and were replaced by struck coins. The as was struck from the coinage reform of 211 BCE until the rule of the dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla. The standard obverse type was a bearded head of Janus with the denomination mark "I" above. A ship's prow was standard on the reverse. Sulla struck an issue of asses in 82 BCE, but then no more were issued until the time of the imperial coinages.



A sestertius (reverse shown) depicts a detailed view of the Ianus Geminus with closed doors – a ceremonial symbol of peace throughout all Roman-controlled lands.

Photo by Classical Numismatic Group via CC BY-SA 2.5.

There is a galley prow on the reverse with "PIVS" above and "IMP" below. A particularly interesting feature of the asses struck by Sextus Pompey is the faces of Janus on the obverse resemble that of his father Pompey the Great.

IANUS GEMINUS COINAGE

I would like to touch briefly upon a famous series of coins issued by the emperor Nero (54-68 CE).

In his coinage of the mid-60s CE, he struck gold aurei and an extensive series of base metal sestertii, dupondii and asses depicting the Ianus Geminus to commemorate the achievement of peace on land and sea throughout the empire.

The legend on the reverse of the aureus reads "IANVM CLVSIT PACE P. R. TERRA MARIQ PARTA" around a representation of one end of the Ianus Geminus with the doors closed. The base metal coins also depict the end and one sidewall of the Ianus Geminus with closed doors and a legend commemorating the event, such as "PACE P R TERRA MARIQ PARTA IANVM CLVSIT" on the sestertius. ❄️

IMPERATORIAL COINAGE

In the mid-first century BCE, the sons of Pompey the Great both struck asses with janiform heads as they continued their deceased father's fight with the party of Julius Caesar.

Among the coinage of Gnaeus Pompey Junior, the elder son of Pompey, is an issue of asses with the laureate head of Janus with "I" above on the obverse. A ship's prow with "CN Mag" is above and "IMP" below. The inscription may be

hard to read because the "MA" (in "MAG") is a monogram (a motif of two or more letters).

Pompey Junior was captured and executed in 45 BCE.

Sextus Pompey, the younger son of Pompey the Great, carried on the fight but was captured and executed on the orders of Marc Antony in 35 BCE. He struck an issue of bronze asses with a janiform head, the usual letter "I" and "MAGN" above on the obverse. As on the issue of his brother, the letters "MA" are in monogram form.

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