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["Schraubmedaille" or Box Medal] JOHANN THOMAS STETTNER and GEORG ADAM, Wars of Liberation

In German, 8 hand-colored etchings by Georg Adam with 10 accompanying etched captions printed on paper roundels, inside a silver-plated box medal engraved by Johann Thomas Stettner

Germany (Nuremberg), c. 1814

A silver-plated box medal, on the obverse a uniformed bust facing left of Crown Prince Frederick William of Württemberg inscribed F W KARL KRONPRINZ V WURTEMBERG, on the reverse a figure standing facing, resting the point of sword on ground, arms and armor at feet, inscribed SEIN NAHME GLAENZ SOLANG DIE ERD ESCHWEBT, containing a set of 18 paper roundels (complete), each 21 mm. in diameter, comprising 8 FINE ETCHINGS BY GEORG ADAM meticulously hand-colored in watercolors and 10 etchings of captions with the text on 8-14 lines, small (etched) numbers at the top of the roundels, two text roundels pasted inside the medal: 10 (obverse) and 9 (reverse), the other 16 roundels glued back-to-back and attached to each other with a black ribbon, roundels attached out of order, one roundel pair attached incorrectly in between two roundels and with a part of the text roundel (no. 1) glued to the image roundel (no. 2) resulting in a tear and a small loss of text and image and preventing these roundels from unfolding correctly, but both sides can still be viewed almost entirely, ribbon fragile between roundels 6 and 6 (2 and 2 on the reverse), minor signs of wear, in overall excellent condition. Kept in a modern case with silk and velvet inlays by the jeweler De Breuch & Willemot of Ghent. Dimensions (diameter) 29 mm.

A curious object that is as much a part of the history of the book as it is the history of coins, this is a Box Medal or Box Thaler ("Schraubmedaille" and "Schraubtalers"). A Box Medal was a large coin or medal that contained hidden secrets, in this case a series of unfolding roundels that commemorate in text and image the campaign of Crown Prince Frederick William Charles of Württemberg during the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon in 1814. The medal is very finely engraved on both sides; the eight detailed etchings are meticulously painted in watercolors. In excellent condition, this is a fine example of an unusual genre that ties the history of coins to print culture.

PROVENANCE

1. The box medal was engraved by Johann Thomas Stettner (1786-1840), the German sculptor and medalist active in Nuremberg, who signed the portrait of the Crown Prince of Württemberg on the obverse (front face) of the medal.

The etchings contained in our box medal were engraved by Georg Adam (1784-1823), a German illustrator, painter and engraver, who signed the first roundel in the series "G. Adam 01". Georg Adam was a very talented artist, active mainly in Munich, where he was in contact with the best landscape artists and made several etchings of landscapes. The box medal was made in Nuremberg shortly after the Allies' entry into Paris on 31 March 1814.

2. Private Collection.

TEXT

The eighteen roundels with historical scenes and the facing text are made from copperplate etchings. The text roundels proceed as follows:

1. "Am 24 Januar 1814 hatten die K(öniglich) Württembergischen Truppen ein glänzendes Gefecht bei Colombe zu bestehen. Muthvoll durchbrachen sie die erste Stellung des Feindes u. drängten ihn bis Lignol D(...)nd verlohrt an Todten V(...)leten u. Gefangenen (...) welche sämtlich der alten Charge bestanden."

(On 24 January 1814, the Royal Württemberg troops fought a brilliant battle near Colombe. They bravely broke through the enemy's first position and pushed them back to Lignol D(...)nd lost in deaths and prisoners, who all belonged to the old charge);

2. "In der Schlacht bei Brienne, d. 1. Feb. 1814 zeichnete sich das König C. Württembergische Armeekorps unter Anführung St. K. Hoheit des Kronprinzens sehr aus. Die K. Kuv. bekam Gelegenheit mehrere sehr schöne Chargen auszuführen. Der Feind verlohrt einige 1000 Gefangene, u. 73 Kanonen."

(In the battle of Brienne, Feb. 1, 1814, Württemberg army corps under the leadership of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince distinguished itself greatly. The Royal Cavalry had the opportunity to carry out several very beautiful charges. The enemy lost several thousand prisoners and 73 cannons);

3. "Am 11. Feb. 1814 wurde Sens von dem K(öniglich) Württembergischen Armeekorps mit Sturm genommen. Sie grössten Schwierigkeiten wurden durch die Tapferkeit des Inf: Reg. No. 4 überwunden u. es bedeckte sich in Ver ein mit den Inf: Reg. No. 6. 9. u. 10. bei dieser Unternehmung mit den grössten Ruhm."

(On 11 Feb. 1814, Sens was taken by storm by the Royal Württemberg Army Corps. The greatest difficulties were overcome by the bravery of Inf. Reg. No. 4 and, together with Inf. Reg. No. 6, 9 and 10, it achieved the greatest glory in this enterprise);

4. "Bei Montereau bestant am 18 Febr 1814 das König C. Württembergische Armeekorps einen äusserst glorieichen Kampf. Unvergesslich wird dieser Tag in den Annalen Württembergs bleiben, den die Ausdauer u. Tapferkeit seiner Krieger, gegen eine grosse Übermacht ist ewigen Ruhmswerth."

(At Montereau, on 18 Feb 1814, the King C. Württemberg army corps fought a most glorious battle. This day will remain unforgotten in the annals of Württemberg, for the endurance and bravery of its warriors against a great superior force is of eternal fame);

5. "Am 21 Merz 1814 krönte bei Arcis sur Aube ein schöner Sieg, die heldenmüthigen Anstrengungen des Kronprinzens von Württemberg u. seiner Krieger. Gross war der Verlust des Feindes; an Gefangenen allein verlohrt er niber 3000 Mann."

(On 21 March 1814, the heroic efforts of the Crown Prince of Württemberg and his warriors were crowned by a fine victory at Arcis-sur-Aube. Great was the enemy's loss; in just prisoners they lost more than 3000 men);

6. "Glänzend war der Antheilwelchen der Kronprinz v. Württemberg mit seinen Kriegeren an der berühmten Schlacht v. Fere Champenoise d. 25 Merz nahm. Vor Tags anbruch stiess er mit den Vortrab der Armee bei Sompuis auf den Feind, u. warf ihn auf allen Punkten 10000 Gef: 100 Kana 120 Pulverwägen wurden erbeut."

(The Crown Prince of Württemberg and his warriors played a brilliant part in the famous battle of Fère-Champenoise on March 25. Before daybreak with his advance troops, he encountered the enemy at Sompuis, and broke through at all points. 10000 troops: 100 cannons (and) 120 powder wagons were captured);

7. "Das K(öniglich) Württembergische Armeekorps errang sich in dem Gefechten vor Paris d. 30 Merz 1814, dem Kranz des schönsten Ruhmes. St. Maure u. Charenton sind ewige Zeugen seiner Tapferkeit. Schön waren Throphäen dieses Tages, sie bestanden aus 80 Kanonen und 3 Fahnen."

(The Royal Württemberg Army Corps won the wreath of the most beautiful glory in the battles outside Paris on March 30, 1814. Saint-Maur and Charenton are eternal witnesses of his bravery. The trophies of this day were beautiful, they consisted of 80 cannons and 3 flags);

8. "Der 31 Merz 1814 war der grosse Tag des Einzugs der Verbündeten in Paris. St. K. Hoheit der Kronprinz v. Württemberg führten ihre tapfern Krieger im stolzen Siegeszug durch die Strassen dieser Stadt, u. hoch klopfen Aller Herzen ob den Erfolg ihrer Thaten, welche bewunderungsvoll Europa austaut."

(March 31, 1814 was the great day of the entry of the allies into Paris. His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Württemberg led his brave warriors in a proud victory march through the streets of this city, and all hearts beat high for the success of their deeds, which were admired by Europe);

9. "Ha! herrlich schmücket, junger, erhabner Held; Dich schon des Sieges strahlender Lorbeer kranz. Du kämpftest gross für Deutchlands Ehre; sprengtest mit Kühnheit die schweren Fesseln."

(Ha! Gloriously adorned, young, sublime hero; the laurel wreath of victory is already shining on you. You fought great for Germany's honor; with boldness you burst the heavy fetters);

10. "Friedrich Wilhelm Carl Kronprinz v. Württemberg ist geboren den 27 Sept: 1781 Im Feldzug von 1814 zeigte er einem hohen militärischen Geistu stolz blick jeder Würtemberger auf den Helden, der ihre Fahnen so glorreich im Land der Feindewehen liess."

(Friedrich Wilhelm Carl Crown Prince of Württemberg was born on 27 Sept: 1781. In the campaign of 1814, he exhibited high military spirit to every habitant of Württemberg, who let their flags wave so gloriously in the land of the enemy).

ILLUSTRATION

Eight circular copperplate etchings by Georg Adam, painted in watercolors, represent scenes of battle, and the final etching, no. 8, shows the entry of the soldiers in Paris. The first etching, no. 1, signed by Georg Adam: "G. Adam 01", shows the Crown prince William I of Württemberg leading the cavalry in battle.

The text and image roundels were originally arranged with the image on the left and the text explaining the historical events on the right. The roundels in our box medal were attached slightly out of order, as follows: image 1 - text 1 (behind image 6), image 6 – text 6, image 7 - text 7, image 8 – text 8; on the other side: image 5 – text 5, image 2 (behind text 5) – text 2, image 3 – text 3, image 4 – text 4. Text roundels 9 and 10, further celebrating the Crown Prince Württemberg, were pasted inside the two halves of the medal.

Stettner is known to have engraved over twenty box medals celebrating various historical events between 1806 and 1828 (see Stettner in Thieme-Becker 1992, vol. 32, pp. 18-19). For instance, in 1814, Stettner struck another medal to celebrate the liberation battles with a scene of the Allies' entry into Paris through the Arc-de-Triomphe on the reverse; see the medal in the British Library (Online Resources). Three years later, in 1817, Stettner made another box medal in collaboration with Georg Adam, recounting the "Year Without a Summer," the agricultural disaster of 1816 that led to worldwide famine in 1816 and 1817; this medal contained eight illustrations printed from etchings by Adam (Online Resources). Also in 1817, Stettner and Adam collaborated on a box medal to commemorate the Reformation Jubilee (current locations unknown). Our box medal is known in literature (cf. Thieme-Becker 1992); however, we cannot evaluate its true rarity, since we have been unable to determine how many copies survive.

Crown Prince Frederick William of Württemberg (1781-1864) led the Württemberg troops against Napoleon in the campaign of the War of the Sixth Coalition (in Germany known as Wars of Liberation). The campaign ended in total defeat for Napoleon, as the Austrian, Prussian, Russian, and other German armies invaded France and forced Napoleon into exile on the island of Elba. The most important Allied victories in which Frederick William's troops (the IV Corps in the main Allied army) participated were the battles of Bar-sur-Aube on January 24 (roundel 1), La Rothière on February 1 (cf. roundel 2; the battle of Brienne actually took place on January 29), Montereau on February 18 (roundel 4), Fère-Champenoise on March 25 (roundel 6) and the battle of Paris on March 30 (roundel 7).

"Schraubtalers" and "Schraubmedaille" were first made in Augsburg in the second half of the sixteenth century, but most date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "Schraubtaler" literally means a "screw-thaler" (a thaler was a large silver coin first minted at Joachimsthal). In English, they are known as box medals or box thalers. The earliest examples were made from actual coins that were hollowed out to create a space inside that was used for tiny paintings. Later examples, box medals, that used purpose-made embossed medals, became popular in the beginning of the eighteenth century; the larger space inside of medals allowed thicker paper to be inserted, which in turn allowed the use of copperplate etchings and the manufacturing in larger numbers. Our coin is technically a "steckmedaille" in which the two halves are stuck rather than screwed together. The first examples of "steckmedaille" were made in Nuremberg at

the beginning of the nineteenth century, and many of them, as our example by Stettner and Adam, relate to the Napoleonic Wars.

LITERATURE

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Thieme, U. and F. Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 37 vols, Munich, 1992.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Stettner/Adam famine Medal of 1817

<https://www.backaldrin.com/fr-ch/magazine-client/#!/en/7DTjwsmh/piece-of-the-hour-the-stettner-screw-coin/?in=1LwMjCY7>

Images in Wikimedia

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Johann_Thomas_Stettner#/media/File:Medaille_1817_etchings1.jpg

and

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Johann_Thomas_Stettner#/media/File:Medaille_1817_etchings2.jpg

Stettner Medal, British Museum

britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_2006-0507-5

Crown Prince Frederick William of Württemberg (king of Württemberg from 1816)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_I_of_W%C3%BCrttemberg

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