

# Besprechungen

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*Dieter Fischer, Hermann Maué, Medaillen und Schaumünzen auf Ereignisse in der Reichsstadt Nürnberg 1521–1806. Wissenschaftliche Beibände zum Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums Bd. 34. Nürnberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2014. 309 p., illustrated with 16 text figures and reproductions of 341 medals. ISBN 978-3-936688-79-5. € 38.50.*

This volume constitutes a worthy sequel to Hermann Maué's magisterial book on Sebastian Dadler, one of the best monographs on a medalist<sup>1</sup>. It treats medals commemorating events from the period commencing with the anticipated visit of Emperor Charles V in 1521 (medal designed by Albrecht Dürer, cat. 1) and terminating with the absorption of Nuremberg into the kingdom of Bavaria in 1806 (medal by Johann Thomas Stettner, cat. 324). An annex discusses sixteen additional medals which have been unjustifiably associated with the city in the literature (cat. 325–341).

The history of medals in Nuremberg is presented in an absolutely exemplary manner. It is somewhat regrettable however that the authors make no attempt to place their account within the wider framework of European medal production. Drawing parallels and making comparisons with other cities would have enhanced the work, facilitating the insertion of these objects into the larger context of European medallic history.

The authors make a clear distinction between historical and portrait medals. Their catalogue excludes the numerous important medallic portraits produced in Nuremberg during this period. The authors note that the great masters active in the city during the first half of the sixteenth century – Hans Schwarz, Matthes Gebel, Friedrich Hagenauer, Joachim Deschler and Hans Bolsterer – devoted themselves entirely to portraiture, and hence had no influence on the series of medals considered in the present volume. The reverses of their works generally consisted of coats of arms and did not include images of events associated with the lives of the subjects depicted on the obverses. The historical medals are frequently bereft of obverse busts, nevertheless one finds a number of fine examples of the art of the medallic portrait within the work, especially from the eighteenth century.

The objects are considered from a purely historical perspective, omitting any consideration of their artistic context. No biographies of artists are included, nor is there any attempt to trace the development of the art of the medal in Nuremberg. Fischer and Maué appear to justify this exclusion upon the absence of any art historical or theoretical considerations within the extensive literature on medals published in the city (see p. 19). From our contemporary perspective such an evaluation would have of course been possible. In any event, within their self-imposed limits, Fischer and Maué have produced a volume of extraordinary merit and importance, providing extensive information based on primary sources which should be of considerable interest to all historians of the Early Modern period. Their extensive commentaries provide a rich and evocative portrait of their city.

The catalogue is preceded by a highly informative introductory essay, placing Nuremberg's medals in their historical context. It incorporates a thorough analysis of the system of government of this patrician state, indispensable for an understanding of the patronage and dissemination of medals. A detailed geopolitical description of Nuremberg and its territory likewise facilitates the reader's task. Of exceptional interest is the discussion of the means by which medals were commissioned and presented within the state. The authors outline the history of commercial production and sales, commencing in the late sixteenth century with the activities of the prolific medalist Valentin Maler (c.1540–1603) and continuing into the eighteenth century with the firms of Lazarus Gottlieb Lauffer (?–1709) and his son Caspar Gottlieb (1674–1745). They explain that the Lauffers did not engage directly in the engraving process but oversaw the striking of medals from dies in their possession. These were produced by leading artists such as Georg Hautsch (1660–1715), Philipp Heinrich Müller (1654–1719) and the Vestners (Georg Wilhelm (1677–1740) and his son Andreas (1707–1754). A comprehensive sale catalogue, *Das Laufferische Medaillenkabinet*, was published by Carl Gottlieb Lauffer in 1742. It would perhaps have been worthwhile to have noted that the Lauffers did not deal exclusively with products pertaining to Nuremberg. They sold other items of potential interest to their clients,

1 H. MAUÉ, Sebastian Dadler 1586–1657. Medaillen im Dreissigjährigen Krieg. Wissenschaftliche Beibände zum Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums 28 (Nürnberg 2008). Reviewed by W. Eisler, SM 60, Heft 237, 2010, pp. 25–27.

notably a set of papal medals engraved by the artists whom they had employed. After the death of the Lauffers, their dies were acquired by another “editor”, Georg Nikolaus Riedner, master of the mint from 1764 until his death in 1793. The division of labor within eighteenth-century medal production in Nuremberg stands in sharp contrast to the situation in other cities, notably Geneva, where the Dasser firm of medalists controlled all aspects of production and sales<sup>2</sup>.

The authors offer illuminating commentaries on technical aspects of medal production during the period in Nuremberg, notably on the special problems associated with engraving and striking legends on edges. They likewise comment on the extremely rich literature published in their city, in particular the 22-volume *Historische Münz-Belustigung* of Johann David Köhler (1729–1750), the 8-volume *Sammlung Merkwürdiger Medaillen* of Johann Hieronymus Lochner and Georg Andreas Will’s *Nürnbergischen Münzbelustigungen* (4 vols, 1764–1767). All of these publications remain indispensable for research on European medals to this day.

The introduction likewise offers a very enlightening overview of the occasions commemorated by these medals. The authors discuss their role within imperial entries alongside triumphal arches, ceremonies, fireworks and additional gifts offered to the sovereign and his entourage. Other works were offered as prizes for the numerous shooting competitions held in the city. Anniversaries of institutions were likewise celebrated with medals. One such event was the centennial of the creation of the Pegnesischer Blumenorden, a group devoted to pastoral poetry founded in 1644 by the patrician Georg Philipp Harsdörffer and the poet and theologian Johannes Klaj, whose members took the names of flowers (Peter Paul Werner (cat. 264) and Andreas Vestner (attrib., cat. 265)). Other works commemorated the three hundredth anniversary of the purported invention of printing in Germany in 1440 (cat. 255–258). The University of Altdorf and the Nuremberg Gymnasium were the subject of several pieces. As one would expect, a significant number of works were devoted to events in church history, notably the Augsburg Confession and the Lutheran Reformation. Medals were systematically placed in the foundations of important con-

structions including bridges, public buildings such as the southern wing of the Town Hall or even private palaces, and additional examples of these pieces were disseminated to dignitaries. The authors conclude with a consideration of the manner in which the image of city itself was depicted on the surfaces of these works.

Whereas categories are presented in an exemplary manner, students and scholars of the ties linking regional and local history with the entirety of Europe would have welcomed an effort to address their concerns. Although a comprehensive treatment of these issues would have exceeded the limits of the introduction and the book as a whole, a few comments on parallels occurring elsewhere would have enhanced the reader’s experience. It may have been useful for instance to note that during the Early Modern period cities vied with each other to receive their sovereigns in the most splendid manner, and that Nuremberg’s medals for imperial entries should be viewed within this larger framework. The Pegnesischer Blumenorden was the Nuremberg equivalent of Arcadian societies founded in other cities, notably Rome, whose members were often celebrated on medals. The tercentenary of printing in 1740 was celebrated throughout Germany, notably at the University of Leipzig, where foreign engravers, the Dassiers of Geneva, succeeded in having their work reproduced in the published official discourse of one of its leading professors, Johann Christian Gottsched<sup>3</sup>. Medals commemorating the bicentennial of the Reformation circulated widely throughout the Protestant world and certain celebrations spawned interrelated projects. And whereas, as the authors assert, Nuremberg was an innovator for the placing of medals in foundations north of the Alps, this practice was firmly established in Italy in the fifteenth century<sup>4</sup>. In view of the ties linking the city with the Italian Peninsula, its fathers were doubtless aware of such precedents. Their actions were not solely derived from German medieval ideas of warding off evil, as one might conclude from the introduction<sup>5</sup>. The incorporation of city views on medals is likewise a universal theme which would have merited further commentary and comparisons.

These remarks should not in any way discourage potential readers of this remarkable

2 See W. EISLER, *The Dassiers of Geneva*, 2 vols (Lausanne and Geneva 2002–2005).

3 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 129–130.

4 See M. DELBEKE – M. SCHRAVEN (eds.), *Foundation, Dedication and Consecration in Early Modern Rome* (Leiden/Boston 2012).

5 «Dieser Brauch greift das früher übliche Bauopfer auf, das als Zaubermittel Böses abwehren und zugleich Glück bringen sollte.» (p. 22).

volume, for the authors succeed admirably in presenting the history of their city through medals. Each catalogue entry includes a German translation of legends written in Latin. The detailed descriptions of events based on unpublished sources, notably the chronicles of Johann Müllner, Hans Stark and Andreas Deprés, are of considerable value, as are the numerous citations of documents concerning the production and dissemination of the medals, drawn from the ledgers of the Staatarchiv Nürnberg. Complete bibliographies accompany each entry. The photographic reproductions are uniformly excellent, although the appearance and effect of the book might have been enhanced through the inclusion of some color plates, enlargements and details.

One can only mention a few of the many extraordinarily interesting objects illustrated and fully described in the volume. Among the more exceptional pieces is Valentin Maler's work commemorating the frightful flood of 1595 (cat. 41), the foundation medal for the extension of the Nuremberg Town Hall designed by Jacob Wolff the Younger (1619, cat. 85), the celebration of the city's status as one of the four great banking centers of Europe alongside Venice, Amsterdam and Hamburg

(Christian Maler, 1624, cat. 96), the foundation medal for the new penitentiary and workhouse (Johann Jakob Wolrab, 1673, cat. 141), the Death of Emperor Leopold with its learned citations from Ovid and refined classical imagery (Georg Hautsch and Georg Wilhelm Vestner, 1705, cat. 177), the piece recounting the fascinating history of the imperial regalia bequeathed to the city by Emperor Sigismund in 1423 (Georg Hautsch, c. 1709, cat. 181), the Entry of Emperor Charles VI decorated with a superb triumphal arch (Philipp Heinrich Müller and Georg Wilhelm Vestner, 1711, cat. 188), and the Birthday Festivities of Margrave Carl Wilhelm Friedrich held in the gardens of Johann Friedrich IV von Sichert (Peter Paul Werner, 1754, cat. 281), a virtuoso work depicting the Sichert estate and the spectacle itself in remarkable detail. All are of exceptional interest for political, social, cultural and urban historians, demonstrating at the same time the seminal role of medals in the Early Modern period. Fischer and Maué are to be commended for producing an invaluable research tool and a highly readable, stimulating book.

William Eisler