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*Hermann Maué*, Sebastian Dadler 1586–1657. Medaillen im Dreissigjährigen Krieg, Wissenschaftliche Beibände zum Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, Bd. 28, Nuremberg: Verlag des Germanischen Nationalmuseums, 2008. 218 pp. Illustrated with 57 text figures and reproductions of 165 medals. ISBN 978-3-936688-33-7. EUR 49.–

In this excellent monograph, Hermann Maué does full justice to one of the most extraordinary medalists of the Early Modern period. Sebastian Dadler blended inventiveness and technical mastery of die engraving in achieving an extremely elevated level of artistic brilliance. The seemingly innumerable details covering the surfaces of his works are at the same time beautifully rendered and subjected to a rigorous spatial logic. Figures are infused with a vibrant and moving expressiveness which the artist inherited from the great masters of the German Renaissance such as Dürer, Cranach, Burgkmair and Altdorfer. It may be said that his works are the medallic equivalents of the great masterworks of German sixteenth-century art.

As Adam Więcek's work on Sebastian Dadler, the only previous monographic study on the subject, is available exclusively in Polish<sup>1</sup>, Maué provides a vital service by presenting the artist's work to the wider world of scholars and connoisseurs for the first time. An introductory section incorporates an examination of Dadler's place in medallic literature, a detailed biography, careful observations on technique, and an investigation of visual sources employed by the artist (prints, medals and coins). This portion is followed by a fully illustrated catalogue of the 165 commemorative, sacred and profane medals attributed to Dadler by Maué, in which subjects, symbols and historical circumstances are considered with consummate skill. The final section consists of a list of rejected attributions from the Więcek monograph, an appendix of archival documents, biographies of Dadler's collaborators, a corpus of legends, a bibliography, concordances between the Więcek and Maué catalogues and an index of places and names. The photos are uniformly good, and all legends are clearly legible. Enlargements of portions of the medals are employed to elucidate technical questions (the usage of punches, modifications to dies for new strikes,

etc.). Additional motifs extracted from the densely covered surfaces of the medals would have enhanced our appreciation of the artist's genius; presumably their inclusion would have exceeded budgetary limitations.

Born in Strasbourg, Sebastian Dadler was trained as a goldsmith. He executed his first medal, commemorating the 38<sup>th</sup> birthday of Johann George I, Elector of Saxony, in 1623. In the course of an itinerant career set against the tumultuous background of the Thirty Years' War, he was active in Augsburg, Dresden and Hamburg, provided medal dies for mint masters and engravers in Wrocław, Gdańsk, Riga, Stockholm and Lübeck, and executed some highly significant medals for the Dutch Republic. In addition to his commemorative works, he also engraved medals for baptisms and marriages, Christmas and the New Year, as well as devotional and secular pieces.

Maué notes that these achievements would earn unstinting praise from medal connoisseurs of the eighteenth century, notably Johann David Köhler, Philipp Wilhelm Flad and Johann Ludwig Ammon. The latter referred to Dadler as «Ein sehr künstlicher Medailleur in Teutschland ..., der sich durch seine nette und subtile Arbeit sehr berühmt gemacht». The increasing influence of the classical ideal in the wake of the publication of Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* in 1764, and the consequent disparagement of Baroque style and iconography would inevitably lead to a relative decline in the artist's critical fortunes. In his groundbreaking study on German medallic art, Heinrich Bolzenthals, while admiring Dadler's technical skills, criticized his alleged tasteless and mechanical manner, deemed typical of the period<sup>2</sup>. The prejudice against seventeenth century medalists such as Dadler would persist into the early twentieth century, where it would merge with a modernist preference for casting over the striking method employed by the artist, deemed less «authentically artistic», and would disappear only with the rise of Baroque art historical studies during the course of the following decades. With the publication of Więcek's fundamental work in 1962 and subsequent studies culminating in Maué's monograph, it is now possible to fully appreciate the innovative brilliance of this master.

- 1 A. WIĘCEK, Sebastian Dadler. Medalier gdafski XVII wieku (Gdańsk 1962).
- 2 H. BOLZENTHAL, Skizzen zur Kunstgeschichte der modernen Medaillenarbeit (Berlin 1840).

Dadler is undoubtedly one of the very few medalists whose principal contribution to the art lay outside of portraiture. In his detailed and fascinating account of Dadler's ultimately unsuccessful efforts to obtain the commission for the coronation medal of Queen Christina of Sweden in 1649 (pp. 20–25), Maué attributes failure to changed taste at court. He notes that the queen preferred the Italian Baroque style employed by the successful candidate, the Roman-trained French artist Erich Parise, thereby rejecting Dadler's Germanic/Netherlandish manner of portraiture, replete with intricate details and allegorical references. Without wishing to refute the author's thesis, it should be noted that among the 85 medals of historical personages and events included in his catalogue, only a dozen or so feature portrait busts. This relative indifference to what was normally an essential aspect of medallic art may have contributed to the final rejection of his Swedish project. Dadler's portrait busts, however competently executed, pale in significance beside other displays of virtuosity which leap forth from every page of Maué's catalogue. One of the most brilliant of these performances, *The Death and Burial of King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden* (1634; cat. 35), enmeshes the ruler within an incredibly dense network of visual references. On the obverse, the figure of the monarch lies in state in full armor, looking very much like a Gothic tomb effigy, bemoaned in the clouds above by a crowd of putti while rays of divine light descend from the heavens. On the reverse, the skeletal remains leap dramatically to life, placed on a chariot pulled by a galloping steed and crowned by Fortitude and Faith. Crushed beneath the wheels lies the contorted body of the monstrous Whore of Babylon. The motifs composing this tour-de-force deeply rooted in Late Gothic art and spirituality are carefully explained by the author.

Another extraordinary portrayal of sovereignty presented in this volume is Dadler's masterful work depicting Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange and Stadholder of the Netherlands and the marriage of his son Prince William to Mary Henrietta Stuart (1641; cat. 47, illustrated in color on the covers). On the obverse, Frederick Henry is seated majestically on a throne trampling allegorical figures of his enemies, while in the

left background he is shown on horseback besieging a city. On the reverse, his son invites his English princess into an enchanting garden protected by a wattle fence known as a *hollandse tuin*, emblematic of the secure prosperity of the Dutch Republic. Its portal is guarded by the Belgic Lion, symbolizing the Netherlands, brandishing a sword and holding a bundle of arrows embodying the United Provinces. Within the enclosure, the attentive spectator discovers minute images of couples promenading through formal gardens and groves of orange trees which refer to the prince's family. In the distance are ships at sea, likewise wonderfully rendered, attesting to the might and wealth of the Dutch nation. Through this dense but ordered assemblage of symbols, the medalist succeeds admirably in evoking the intricate ties between a noble family and the state it governed.

Among the most impressive of Dadler's «portraits» emerging from this volume are those of cities. In these works he displays a profound understanding of the city's position within its social, political and topographical contexts, coupled with a remarkable knowledge of perspective and cartography. On the obverse of his medal commemorating the granting of imperial customs privileges to Hamburg in 1636 (cat. 39), he celebrates its power and might by means of an extraordinary device: a giant figure of Mercury, protector of trade, replicating the form of the Colossus of Rhodes, standing astride the entrance to the port. Maué provides a concise explanation of this motif (p. 83): «Wie der Koloss die Hafeneinfahrt von Rhodos beherrschte, so dominiert der Colossus Mercurio die Elbe und befördert den Handel mit Hamburg». On the reverse, Dadler pays homage to the city's prestige in a precise bird's-eye view which, as the author observes, exceeds in precision and richness of detail all of its engraved predecessors (p. 31). The artist demonstrates an equal mastery of the perspective view. His rendering of Breisach on a medal commemorating its conquest by Bernard, Duke of Saxony-Weimar in 1639 (cat. 43), inspired by an engraving published the previous year (fig. 19, p. 31), surpasses its model in the precise rendering of planar recession.

Apart from his historical medals, Dadler created beautifully conceived and executed

works on religious and profane themes. A marriage medal (cat. 101) is covered with a dense network of flowers, fruits and grapevines, symbols of faith and fecundity infused with a naturalism all the more admirable considering the minute scale employed. The spirit of the German Renaissance inhabits images of the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Kings: miniaturized tondi offered as Christmas and New Year's gifts (cat. 103–107). Works depicting the Man of Sorrows and the Instruments of the Passion and the Mocking of Christ (cat. 110–117) recall Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts of a century earlier. The unexpectedly wide range of Dadler's art is likewise revealed through medals on profane

themes, notably two surprisingly erotic works, treating in an ironic manner the themes of Concord and Discord (cat. 162–163). Here we find ourselves in the visual and cultural environment invented by Lucas Cranach and his followers during the sixteenth century.

It is impossible in the space of this review to offer anything more than a glimpse into the fascinating world of Dadler and his medals, so eloquently and precisely portrayed in Maué's volume. The book will surely constitute the standard reference for years to come, providing a solid basis for subsequent research into the artistic, literary and historical contexts of these extraordinary objects.

William Eisler

### Lösung für die Welfensammlung gefunden

Seit Ende November 2008 bekannt wurde, dass sich die Deutsche Bank vom ehemaligen königlichen Münzkabinett zu Hannover, dem Niedersächsischen Münzkabinett der Deutschen Bank, trennen wollte, wurde fieberhaft nach Möglichkeiten für den Fortbestand dieser wichtigen Münzensammlung gesucht. Wie zahlreiche andere Organisationen und Einzelpersonen hat auch die SNG in einem Schreiben an die Deutsche Bank darauf hingewiesen, dass der Verkauf und die Auflösung der Sammlung ein irreparabler Verlust für die Forschung und für die Museumswelt wäre.

Im Dezember 2009 gab nun das Niedersächsische Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur bekannt, dass eine Lösung für die rund 44'000 Münzen und Medaillen umfassende Sammlung des Welfenhauses gefunden werden konnte. Die Landesregierung Niedersachsen hat sich mit der Deutschen Bank darauf verständigt, die Münzen, Medaillen, Plaketten, Marken, Ehrenzeichen und Orden aus der Zeit vom Mittelalter bis in die Neuzeit für insgesamt fünf Millionen Euro zu erwerben. Anschliessend soll die Kollektion ins Niedersächsische Landesmuseum Hannover umziehen, wo schon bald die wichtigsten Stücke der Sammlung in einer Ausstellung zu sehen sein werden.

### Neuerungen im MoneyMuseum in Zürich

Das MoneyMuseum an der Hadlaubstrasse 106 in Zürich hat seit Januar 2010 sein Angebot erweitert. Neu ist die Ausstellung nicht mehr nur dienstags, sondern auch freitags von 13.00 bis 17.30 Uhr geöffnet. Zusätzlich wurde die Besucherbetreuung ausgebaut und das Ausstellungsangebot erweitert. Neu ist der Film «Die Billionen-Dollar-Krise» zu sehen, der in 31 Minuten einen Einblick in die komplizierte Chronik des Entstehens der ak-

tuellen Weltwirtschaftskrise gibt. Der Film ist im MoneyMuseum als DVD erhältlich und auch auf [www.sunflower.ch](http://www.sunflower.ch) online verfügbar.

Bis Juli 2010 werden zudem vier kleine Wechselausstellungen zu geldgeschichtlichen Themen gezeigt: «Münzen aus dem Reich der Mitte und Barren aus aller Welt» zur Entwicklung des chinesischen Geldes von 1500 v. Chr. bis heute, «Ein Streifzug durch die islamische Münzprägung», «Geld in Zeiten von Krieg und Not» sowie «Heilige und religiöse Symbole auf Münzen».

Die Redaktion