

# HELGA MATZKE EUROPEAN SILVER

AN OVAL SILVER SERVING PLATTER, FROM THE ROYAL COLLECTION OF THE HOUSE OF WETTIN, KING AND ELECTOR OF SAXONY AND DUKE OF WARSAW

**Objektnummer: #**

**Dresden, 1748**

**Carl David Schrödel**

**City's hallmarks:** in an oval shield the form of a coat of arms with crossed swords, a 'D' on the lower field and the number of the silver-finesse, here '13', and a crown above on the upper field of the shield for Dresden (Rosenberg no. 1671).

**Maker's mark:** 'C.D/Schrö/del' in a curved shield for the Carl David Schrödel (Rosenberg no. 1675).

**Date letter:** 'Y' for 1748 (Rosenberg no. 1704).

**Engravings:** Engraved underneath on all three candlesticks with initials 'FA' in a shield and below German Royal crown, further engraved with inventory number, and scratch weights

**Dim.:** 42 x 27,5 cm; **weight:** 1369 gr.

## An Oval Silver Serving Platter, from the Royal Collection of the House of Wettin, King and Elector of Saxony and Duke of Warsaw Frederick Augustus I/III (1750-1827)

The present silver serving platter originates from the Royal Family Silver of the House of Wettin and, especially, from the King of Saxony and Duke of Warsaw Frederick Augustus III.

The platter has an oval form, wavy molded rim and has engraved underneath the distinguishing marks of the service: the monogram 'FA' below German Royal crown, the inventory number '24' and the scratch weights information.

## Frederick Augustus III/I, King and Elector of Saxony and Duke of Warsaw (1750-1827)

Frederick Augustus III was the second and only survived child of the Elector Frederick Christian (1722-1763) and his wife duchess Maria Antonia of Bavaria (1724-1780). His father took over power from Frederick Augustus II in 1763, but he died three months later.

Frederick Augustus III assumed political power for 59 years – and by this, he had the longest reign of all the members of the House of Wettin. In 1769, he got married to Countess Palatine Maria Amalia Augusta of Zweibrücken-Birkenfeld (1752-1828), sister of King Maximilian I Joseph of Bavaria. The royal pair had four children, though only one daughter survived to adulthood, Maria Augusta of Saxony.



Frederick Augustus III had declined in 1791 the hereditary Polish Crown. He became in **1806 King Frederick Augustus I of Saxony** by the grace of Emperor Napoleon. In 1807, he was nominated Duke of Warsaw. After the Napoleonic Wars, Saxony was administered first by a Russian and then by a Prussian General government, it lost two thirds of its territory and one third of its inhabitants. The next years of the reign of Frederick Augustus until his death remained calm.

## The Royal Silver Collection of the House of Wettin and the Monogram 'FA'

The court of the House of Wettin in Saxony was quite influenced from the French court of Louis XIV in Versailles since the reign of the John George III, Elector of Saxony (1647-1691) and the Princess Anna Sophie of Denmark (1647-1717). Their table culture and in particular the silver services added a great glamour to the official life of the court.

In 1694, the Prince Frederick Augustus followed as Elector his brother John George who died. Frederick Augustus obtained the royal crown of Poland. Between 1697 and 1763 and with a short interruption in 1706 and 1709, the electorate of Saxony came in personal union with the Kingdom of Poland and both electors of Saxony Frederick Augustus I and II reigned, bearing the royal name of Augustus II and Augustus III.

During the Augustus-era in the royal Saxon-Polish court began an unparalleled display of splendor, influenced particularly by the Versailles court, under the reign of Frederick Augustus I, also called August the Strong. The city of Dresden was still the seat of the government even after the acquisition of the Polish crown and it was also the primary location for the royal silver collection, which gained in importance. Orders for silver objects were given mostly to gold- and silversmiths in Dresden.

The silver services with the monogram 'FA' present a uniform style and it could be said that they belong together. These services build up the so-called Family Silver Collections 'von Schrödel'. The silver objects from the services of the House of Wettin bear, next to the initials, the inventory numbers and the weight information.

## Silver of the House of Wettin through the Ages

The Royal silver collection in Dresden existed in its entirety until the end of the First World War and the abolishment of monarchy. The collection was with no doubt one of the richest collections of silver in Germany. In 1919, every possession in Saxony that belonged to the House of Wettin was confiscated by the state. After 1924, the Royal collection of silver went to the property of the family association *Haus Wettin Albertinische Linie e.V.*, the administrator of which was Prince Ernst Heinrich of Saxony, Duke of Saxony (1896-1971).

With the breakup of the Second World War, the artworks were in the centre of a rescue plan. In 1944, a part of the silver of the House of Wettin was put in wooden boxes, was stored and with the help of six French prisoners of war, they were buried (in total 43 boxes) or hidden in a church in Reichenberg. Despite this, many silver objects of this treasure were melted down after 1946/7, some were excavated and some were transported to Russia as spoils of war.

After the war, some objects were given back to Germany in the 1990s. Other objects and artworks from the silver Royal collection of the Wettin House were smuggled in

black market and were sold in different, exceptional auctions around the world.

The fascinating history of the silver collection as well as of the proprietor's changes through the ages give to the silver collection of the House of Wettin allures of a legend.

The present serving platter from the family Royal silver collection of the House of Wettin was later a **part of Dr. Helmut Seling collection, Munich.**

## Maker

**Carl David Schrödel.** He was born around 1712 as son of the goldsmith Carl Heinrich Schrödel and became a master maker in Dresden in 1741. He is accounted for being goldsmith and court jeweller. He died in Dresden in 1773.

## Literature

Arnold, Ulli, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden – Grünes Gewölbe (Hrsg.), *Dresdner Hofsilber des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin: Kulturstiftung der Länder – Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Freistaat Sachsen, 1994

Kretschmann, Georg, *Das Silber der Wettiner: Eine Schatzsuche zwischen Moskau und New York*, Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1995

Rosenberg, Marc, *Der Goldschmiedemerkzeichen, Dritte erweiterte und illustrierte Auflage, Bd. II: Deutschland D-M*, Frankfurt a. Main: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1923