

HELGA MATZKE EUROPEAN SILVER

SET OF THREE SILVER CANDLESTICKS FROM THE ROYAL SILVER COLLECTION OF DRESDEN, HOUSE OF WETTIN

Object Number: #1003

Dresden, one candlestick 1772 and two c. 1773
Carl David Schrödel

City's hallmarks: mark for Dresden during the third quarter of eighteenth century: in a curved 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' on the upper field of the shield (not like by Rosenberg: similar to 1678 but with 13 'lots').

Maker's mark: 'C.D./Schrödel' in curved shield for Schrödel

Date letter: 'Y' for 1772 (Rosenberg nr. 1713) and 'o/o' for 1773 (Rosenberg nr. 1714)

Engravings: Engraved underneath on all three candlesticks with initials 'FA' in a shield and below Royal crown, further engraved with inventory numbers, scratchweights and control scratch

Height: 23,4 cm (9,05 in.); Weight: each c. 615 gr. / Total weight: 1.829 gr.

Set of Three Silver Candlesticks from the Royal Silver Collection of Dresden, House of Wettin

The present set of three silver candlesticks 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/I. One candlestick was made in 1772 and the other two in 1773.

The candlestick is standing on a spreading and curved foot, which is formed in a wavy manner. Wonderful ornamentation of six applied, curved, embossed leaves, which repeats this moving effect present. Between the foot and the shaft an artfully arranged nodus. The slightly club-shaped shaft is also decorated with wavy leaves, a motif that is to be found again on the spout of the candlestick. The rim of the spout is also wavy structured. Although the candlesticks are exactly the same, they were made in different time-periods from the silversmith of the court Carl David Schrödel.

Underneath the three candlesticks there are engraved the distinguishing marks of the service: the monogram 'FA' below royal crown, the inventory numbers and the scratchweights.

The inventory numbers and scratchweights are as following: '5.' and '2. mr. [mark] 9.lt. [lot] 3.p. [Pfennige] 1'; '51.' and '2.mr. 9.lt.3.p. _'; and '53.' and '2. mr. 9 lt._.9.-'.

The candlesticks have a very elegant and discrete form, which allows their combination with different table services of the court for the warm lighting of the long and opulent diners with services à la française.

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. Up to his 18th year, his mother and his uncle Prince Franz Xavier of Saxony (1730-1806) set up the regency.

In 1769, Frederick got married to the 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 was rushed to participate against France during the Napoleonic Wars. However, Napoleon took the defeated Frederick to his side in 1806. Elector Frederick Augustus III became in 1806 King Frederick Augustus I of Saxony by the grace of Emperor Napoleon. In 1807, Napoleon had concluded peace with Frederick William III of Prussia and the tsar Alexander I of Russia in Tilsit. A consequence of this peace treaty was the nomination of Frederick Augustus as Duke of Warsaw. Frederick Augustus had already declined in a controversial decision the hereditary Polish Crown in 1791 and he could not thus decline this time too.

The bond to Napoleon obliged Saxony to dispose troops against the allies Prussians, Russians and Austrians. After the devastating for Napoleon Battle of the Nations in 16/18 October 1813, the King Frederick Augustus I was brought into jail in Berlin.

In 1815 the King of Saxony returned to his homeland. 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 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, 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 headquarters 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.

After the Seven Years' War some pieces of the Royal silver collection were melted down. However since 1765 there have been given new orders for the Royal silver collection to two prominent brothers, Carl David and Friedrich Reinhard Schrödel.

In 1774, 1789 and 1876, three inventories of the collection have been realized, providing information on new entries, outflows and aggrandizement of services. In these inventories are mentioned six services of white silver of the eighteenth and nineteenth century and next to them information on the initials of the proprietors. The so-called family silver service 'von Schrödel' bears the initials 'FA' below a royal crown. Another service bears the mark of Carl David Schrödel (†1773) and was completed by the brothers Schrödel (probably his sons). This service bears also the monogram 'FA' below a royal crown. Finally, a third service from 'Schrödel' (Carl David Schrödel collaborated with the goldsmith from Dresden Christian Heinrich Roßbach) bears the monogram 'FA'.

The silver services with the monogram 'FA' present a uniform style and it could be said that they belong together. 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). The artworks of the eighteenth century had established the reputation of the Royal silver collection and they were particularly desired. In 1937, the objects and artworks of the collection were inventoried for the last time.

With the breakup of the Second World War, the Prince Ernst Heinrich prepared a detailed plan of security and evacuation from the Moritzburg castle. The artworks were in the centre of his rescue plan. For its preparation, only very few people had helped him, among them his two sons. 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. In 1945, some of the masterpieces of the Royal silver collection were taken off for security reasons. 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. Many objects belonged already before but also after the war to some very famous collectors, like for instance the Bolivian tycoon, so-called 'King of Tin' Antenor Patiño (1896-1982) and the French watchmaker Louis Cartier (1875-1942).

The present set of three candlesticks from the family Royal silver collection of the House of Wettin was part of the collection of Eduard G. Schiffmann in Alexandria, Virginia, USA and in 1967 passed to the collection of the art merchant Frieda Hinze in Berlin. After her death, they passed to the collection of Elisabeth Rohde in Berlin and finally, to the collections of Helga Matzke, Grünwald.

Maker

Carl David Schrödel. Ancestor of the silversmith family Schrödel is Carl Heinrich Schrödel, born around 1679. He became master maker in Dresden in 1709. In 1724, he was appointed silversmith of the court and died in 1753.

His son, Carl David Schrödel, was born around 1712 and became a master maker in Dresden in 1741. He is accounted for being goldsmith and court jeweller. He died in Dresden in 1773. Friedrich Reinhard Schrödel was born around 1728 and became a master maker in Dresden in 1756.

Carl David Schrödel had two sons, who were probably twins, Carl Christian and Friedrich Christian Schrödel, both born around 1745. In 1774, Friedrich appointed for the master's right and in 1775, Carl Christian. Both account for gold- and silversmiths and were appointed as court jeweller. The widow of Carl David Schrödel and mother of the two aforementioned sons had made one of the four gold cutleries for the Royal silver collection.

Friedrich Reinhard Schrödel had also two sons, who were born around 1765 and were also goldsmiths. Carl Gottlieb became a master maker in 1796 and he was a court jeweller. He died in 1833. Gottlieb Benjamin became a master maker in 1798, accounts for gold- and silversmith and he died in 1806.

Literature

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