THE IMPERIAL COLLECTION

A PIECE OF MINTED HISTORY

KÜNKER

Numismatic treasures from the collection of Prussian kings and German emperors of the House of Hohenzollern

Künker Auction Sale 442 am 23 June 2026 in Osnabrück

held in cooperation with

Philipp Württemberg Art Advisory GmbH

Cover
Kingdom of Prussia
Wilhelm I, 1861-1888.
Gold medalin the weight of 120 Ducats 1871,
by E. Weigand and F. W. Kullrich.
General's medal commemorating the victory over France.
Only 25 pieces struck in gold.
Extremely rare. Extremely fine-Uncirculated.

Dear Customers,
Dear Coin Enthusiasts,

We are delighted to announce a very special collection with deep roots in German history. In cooperation with our partner, the Philipp Württemberg Art Advisory GmbH, we will be offering the collection of Prussian kings and German emperors from the House of Hohenzollern on 23 June 2026.

We have brought a selection of items from this collection to the TICC. We hope you will find them particularly interesting, as they are a testament to an era when Japan and Germany shared close ties. When the Iwakura Mission toured Europe between 1871 and 1873, they also visited the capital of a newly founded nation. After centuries of fragmentation, the German Empire had managed to unite, having defeated the great power of France. This victory made people forget the trauma of feeling helpless in the face of Napoleon's armies. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, little Prussia had become a great power under the reign of William I, and Japanese politicians looked to it as a model. Through radical modernization during the Meiji era, Japan became a great power in its own right, finally shaking off the unequal treaties.

Medals reflect how Prussia saw itself at that time. They originate from the personal collection of King Frederick William IV and Emperor William I. They were, therefore, collected by the men under whose leadership the German Empire was founded. Please visit our stand to admire some of the artefacts that bear witness to a development that the members of the Iwakura Mission considered so impressive that they recommended the Japanese people adopt the institutions of the German Empire.

Ulrich Künker, CEO

Ulrich Künker
CEO

Prussia at the Time of the Iwakura Mission

By Ursula Kampmann

The Iwakura Mission was not the first time that Japanese diplomats had met William I, the man who once owned most of the medals being offered at Künker's auction. As early as in 1862, the Takenouchi Mission had spent a few days in Berlin. According to a German newspaper report, William I received them personally in the Throne Room of his Berlin City Palace. But who was this man, and how had he come to be on the throne?

Fig. 3: Official medal for the coronation of William I as King of Prussia on 18 October 1861. He and his wife are depicted wearing their coronation robes. Note the collar with oak leaves beneath William's royal ermine cloak. By wearing his uniform even at his coronation, he emphasized his close ties to the Prussian military.

An Eventful Life

When William I received the Takenouchi Mission on 21 July 1862, less than a year had passed since his coronation. Yet he was already an old man; the Prussian prince, born in 1797, had succeeded his brother Frederick William IV, who died childless on 2 January 1861.

William could lock back on an eventful life. As a small child, he was forced to flee from Napoleon's troops. At the age of 13, he stood by the death bed of his beloved mother, believing her death to be the result of the hardships of the war against Napoleon. At 17, he experienced his first battle and baptism of fire on the front line.

William was the second-born son of King Frederick William III of Prussia and was therefore not destined to rule. Instead, he was passionate about the military, hoping to protect his country from the suffering he had endured as a child. A staunch conservative, he distrusted the liberal ideas of his brother, who ruled as an absolute monarch. The two men had different ideas about how Prussia should be modernized. While his brother collaborated with the emerging middle class, William relied on military strength.

Fig. 4: Official medal for the 1844 General German Industrial Exhibition (Ausstellung deutscher Gewerbeerzeugnisse) in Berlin. The reverse depicts the key drivers of industrialization. Such exhibitions were held under royal patronage in many countries to promote trade and accelerate industrialization.

Industrialization and Education

At that time, a deep rift ran through a society that was undergoing drastic social, economic and cultural changes. The French Revolution had swept away many structures. In the cities, property became the measure of all things. In rural communities, people fought over the rights to land that had formerly been owned by the Church. Industrialization destroyed traditional occupations while also creating new jobs. However, these new jobs required a completely different kind of training and an entirely new educational system. The bourgeoisie celebrated the seemingly infinite possibilities offered by technological advances such as the railroad and the power loom. Across Europe, these machines were showcased and marketed at international trade fairs.

Fig. 2: The King of Prussia receives the Takenouchi Mission in the White Hall of the Berlin Palace. Illustration from Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, 9 August 1862.

Fig. 5: Prize medal for the sciences.

Fig. 6: Grand prize medal of the Academy of Arts. It was awarded to the artists who submitted the best artwork at the major annual art exhibition.

Fig. 7: Humboldt medal of 1847. King Frederick William IV of Prussia personally financed a medal to commemorate the publication of the second volume of Alexander von Humboldt's Cosmos. This piece is likely to be the specimen that the king kept for himself, or that he gave to his brother, William I, who was also a collector.

Fig. 8: In 1849, conservative forces praised William I for suppressing the revolutionary movements militarily. Liberal and democratic circles, of course, viewed his actions differently. This extremely rare medal addresses William on the obverse as commander of the Rhine Army, and its reverse depicts him as the Archangel Michael slaying the dragon of revolution.

The state also played its part in promoting progress. Naturally, this included organizing trade exhibitions. However, basic research also played a central role. In this regard, the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences was of paramount importance. It funded researchers, provided a platform for discussion, recognized scientific achievements and publicized them. Awarding prize medals was a key part of this support.

Fig. 6 highlights a new aspect of cultural education. Primary schools and compulsory education had existed in Prussia since the early 18th century. However, in the 19th century, Prussia started to invest in adult education through art in museums. The prize medal of the Academy of Arts depicts Altes Museum at Lustgarten from the front, where the Prussian king exhibited what was then considered "high art": paintings and statues as well as archaeological objects from Greek and Roman culture. The intention was to cultivate the public's aesthetic sense by viewing these artefacts.

The keen interest that Prussian kings took in unraveling and harnessing nature is illustrated by a medal commissioned by the Prussian king Frederick William IV himself to commemorate the publication of an important book authored by Alexander von Humboldt, who worked in Berlin. The work was titled after his "Cosmos" lectures. In this book, Humboldt sought to unveil the mysteries of nature. His work inspired and stimulated scientific life in Berlin, attracting eminent scientists from all over the world to the Prussian capital.

The House of Hohenzollern was a direct patron of Alexander von Humboldt, who was a regular guest at the royal table. He was expected to entertain the court society in the evenings by reading to them and giving lectures in the palace.

Pauperism and Revolution

While the urban bourgeoisie celebrated progress, many workers were left behind, losing their jobs and livelihoods as a result of the new inventions. Added to this were natural disasters and adverse weather conditions that led to crop failures and famine. Poverty had existed before, but since the ideas of the French Revolution had spread, people no longer blamed God for the state of the economy, but rather their rulers. Everywhere, people were discussing on how best to govern the country. Everyone believed they knew the solution. When a new revolution broke out in Paris in February 1848, many citizens across Europe, including those in Prussia, joined it.

Fig. 9: Gold medal commemorating the unveiling of the statue of Frederick II, funded by Frederick William IV. It is likely that this specimen belonged to Frederick William IV or his brother William I.

The role William I played in the great European Revolution of 1848 is a subject of fierce debate among historians today. As a member of the Prussian military, one of his duties was to defend the government, even by force of arms. This alone made him a hated figure among liberal revolutionaries. After the revolution broke out, William I felt compelled to go into exile. He chose London as a place of residence – one of the few places where things remained calm in 1848. At that time, Great Britain was a constitutional monarchy and the power of the monarch was severely restricted. Whether William was impressed by this is a matter of debate among historians.

Fig. 10: Gold medal from 1855 commemorating the erection of monuments in honor of three important generals in the wars against Napoleon in front of the Berlin Opera.

In any case, his exile lasted only a few months. The revolutionaries had underestimated the strength of the conservatives. Following their defeat, the Prussia to which William returned was a different place to the one he had left. Even the revolutionaries now favored cooperation and evolution through change within the existing institutions.

The Restoration and a Return to Prussia's Glory

The following years were characterized by economic measures, major investment in education, and the creation of a strong military. Frederick II became a symbol of Prussia's restoration, and, on 31 May 1851, his statue was ceremoniously unveiled by King Frederick William IV on the magnificent boulevard Unter den Linden. The event was a grand state ceremony and, as was customary at the time, all princes and dignitaries present were given medals made of different metals depending on their rank.

All of the medals depict the statue of Frederick, which is regarded as one of the most important works of Berlin sculpture. The original can be admired in its original location today. A cast was made for the Tsarist court in Russia, with whom Prussia was on friendly terms. It stood in the famous, now inexistent Amber Room of the Catherine Palace.

Other statues also urged the people in Berlin to embrace a policy of military strength. Count York von Wartenberg, Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher and August Neidhardt von Gneisenau were regarded as great Prussian generals who made it possible to defeat Napoleon. The gold medal in Fig. 10 is dedicated to them; it was issued to celebrate the ceremonial unveiling of the statues and served a similar purpose to that of Fig. 9.

Fig. 11: Coronation of William I. Contemporary oil painting by Adolph von Menzel.

Many statues erected during these years have since disappeared from the cityscape. Medals, however, document their role in royal policy: the statues of eminent generals were intended to serve as role models for all people who passed by. It was an early form of PR work, so to speak.

The Coronation of William I

From 1857 onwards, Frederick William IV fell seriously ill. William I became Prince Regent. Regarded as a guardian of conservative values, he harbored no sympathy for liberal and social democratic parties. His brother died on 2 January 1861 and William assumed the throne. It was not an easy path, as it soon became apparent that he had no support among liberal politicians. The assassination attempt carried out against him by a student just three months before William's coronation illustrates just how unpopular he was. Miraculously, the Prussian king escaped with only a minor neck injury.

To avoid having to come to terms with the representatives of the estates, King William I decided to do without heir homage and chose to crown himself. In order to do so, he had to commission his own crown and fund the celebrations from his own resources.

Little of Interest for the Takenouchi Mission

A few months after William's coronation, the Takenouchi Mission visited the Prussian royal court. By that time, they had already marveled at Paris, London and The Hague. While they had stayed in Paris and The Hague for almost a month each and in London for six weeks, 17 days were deemed sufficient for Germany.

An official reception was held in Berlin by King William I. Afterwards, the delegation proceeded to the Royal Palace, where Queen Augusta acted as hostess. After touring several civilian and military factories as well as attending a session of the House of Representatives, the delegation traveled to Russia.

Prussia did not make a lasting impression. When Fukuzawa Yukichi published his "Conditions of the West" in 1867, detailing the findings of the Takenouchi Mission,

Fig. 12: High-ranking members of the Takenouchi Mission led by Shibata Sadataro (seated in the middle). Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France FT4-NA-235 (2).

Fig. 13: 1885 medal to mark the 70th birthday and the 50th Anniversary of Service of Imperial Chancellor Bismarck.

there was no chapter on Prussia. The author had decided not to write it due to a lack of time. This illustrates perfectly what the Japanese delegation thought of the country in 1862.

What the delegation had overlooked, however, was the economic and military strength of a Germany that had not yet been unified and was (as yet) unable to realize its full potential due to political fragmentation.

Bismarck and William

The ageing and politically less gifted William I was finding it increasingly difficult to convince the members of parliament to support his political plans. What he needed was a born politician who could persuade others on his behalf, forge alliances and secure majorities. In September 1862, he therefore appointed 47-year-old Otto von Bismarck as Prussian Prime Minister. Bismarck shared William's extremely conservative ideals and was feared by liberals for his willingness to resolves conflicts by military means. In fact, his appointment

Fig. 14: Only 100 specimens of the silver version of this medal were minted in 1866 to celebrate Prussia's victory over Austria. This victory determined whether the Hohenzollern or the Habsburgs would be the dominant power in Germany in the future. The obverse lists the names of the 13 Prussian generals involved in this war.

was followed by a series of short wars that propelled Prussia to the forefront of the German states and completed the unification of Germany.

Wars Pave the Way for German Unification

Forging a large, united nation out of dozens of small states was a challenging task – for several reasons. In northern Germany, for example, there was a large area that was technically part of the German Empire but was actually ruled by the Danish king. This situation led to the Second Schleswig War in 1864. It resulted in a clearly defined border between German and Danish territory.

The second issue was whether Prussia or Habsburg-ruled Austria would become the dominant power in Germany. Traditionally, the Habsburgs had provided the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. However, numerous other peoples also lived within the Habsburg Empire. How could Hungarians, Italians, Croats and Ruthenians be integrated into the German Empire?

The rivalry between Prussia and Habsburg culminated in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. At Königgrätz, the Prussian army inflicted a devastating defeat on the Austrians and their allies. At the instigation of William I and Bismarck, the Prussian government refrained from annihilating its opponents completely and instead concluded a peace agreement. This ensured that the south German states remained on Prussia's side, while Prussia founded the North German Confederation on 1 July 1867, with itself at the helm. This step is regarded as the precursor to the establishment of the German Empire.

The War Against France and the Founding of the German Empire

Bismarck's populist masterstroke was to unite all of Germany behind him when a diplomatic dispute arose between France and Prussia. The dispute concerned the candidacy of a prince from the House of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen for the Spanish throne. Napoleon III of France responded unwisely. And Bismarck exploited this for his propaganda. Suddenly, France found itself at war not only with Prussia and the North German Confederation, but also with Prussia's allies: Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hesse-Darmstadt. The German forces enjoyed one victory after another. Within a few months, the outcome of the war was clear. Buoyed by the national elation brought about by this success, Bismarck succeeded in persuading the former allies to unite with the North German Confederation to form the German Empire. On 18 January 1871, William I was proclaimed

Fig. 15: Proclamation of the German Emperor in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles. Oil painting from 1885 by Anton von Werner.

German Emperor in the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles. This iconic moment has not been forgotten in either Germany or France. The French government's insistence on concluding the Treaty of Versailles, which marked Germany's total defeat in the First World War, at that very location was not without reason.

About one month later, the Preliminary Treaty of Versailles was signed. The German Empire secured significant territorial gains and substantial war reparations amounting to five billion gold francs. This sum arrived in Berlin a few months after the war ended, was distributed immediately and sparked a boom in the new German capital.

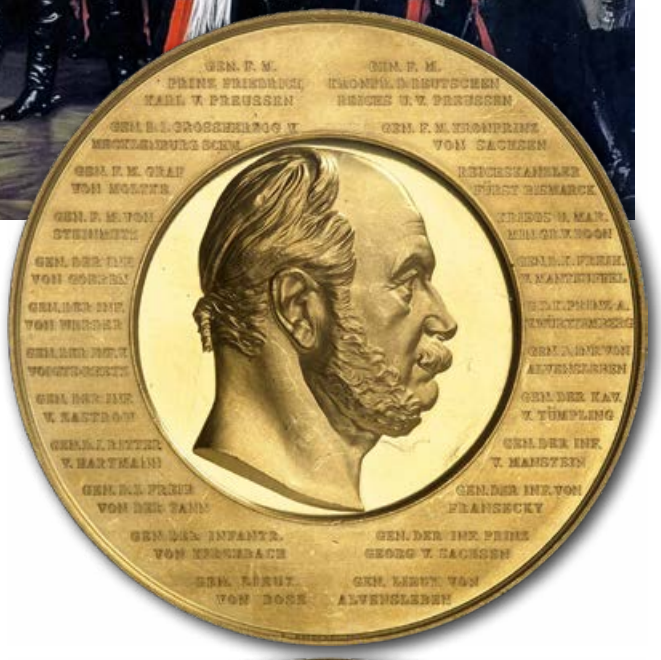

Fig. 16: The Generals' Medal in gold is an icon of German numismatics. It bears the names of the generals who took part in the war against France, and was given to them. As with the 1866 medal, William I, the commander-in-chief of the military, kept a specimen for himself. This is the very medal that the newly crowned German Emperor added to his own coin collection as a symbol of his victory.

Fig. 17: The leading members of the Iwakura Mission with Iwakura Tomomi at the center. Photograph of 1872.

The Iwakura Mission

When the Iwakura Mission set foot on German soil in March 1872, they found a country that was very different from the one the Takenouchi Mission had experienced. Within one decade, an apparently insignificant middle power had evolved to a world power that had brought mighty France to its knees.

On 11 March, the Iwakura Mission was received by the imperial family. They were then invited to the opening of the new session of the House of Parliament, to the emperor's birthday celebrations, horse races and the opera. Representatives of the Iwakura Mission also met the emperor by chance when they attended the opening of the Great Fisheries Exhibition, and were impressed by how naturally the emperor interacted with his subjects.

Iwakura Tomomi was particularly interested in military affairs. He received information from Shinagawa Yajirô, a future politician who had taken part in the Franco-Prussian War as an unofficial observer. However, the delegates were also interested in education, modern manufacturing and architecture. Furthermore, Aoki Shuzo – who had been living in Germany since 1868 and was married to a German woman – drew the attention of the Iwakura Mission to the constitution of the German Empire.

The Chronicler of the Iwakura Mission

Kume Kunitake wrote the official report about the Iwakura Mission, covering its entire journey. This time, the chapter on Prussia was not omitted. On the contrary. Despite the rather short visit of just one month, Kume

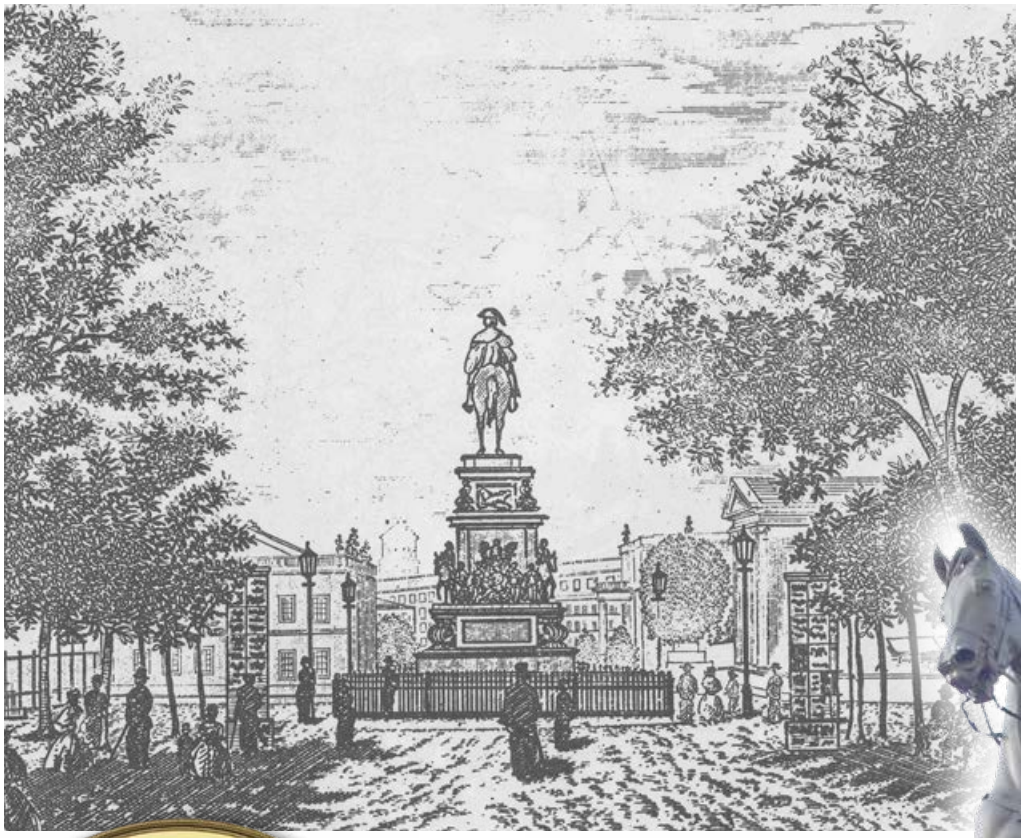

Fig. 18a: Illustration from Kume Kunitake's report on the Iwakura Mission. The monument to commemorate Frederick II of Prussia is clearly visible.

Fig. 18b: Reverse of the Prussian medal commemorating the unveiling of the monument in 1851.

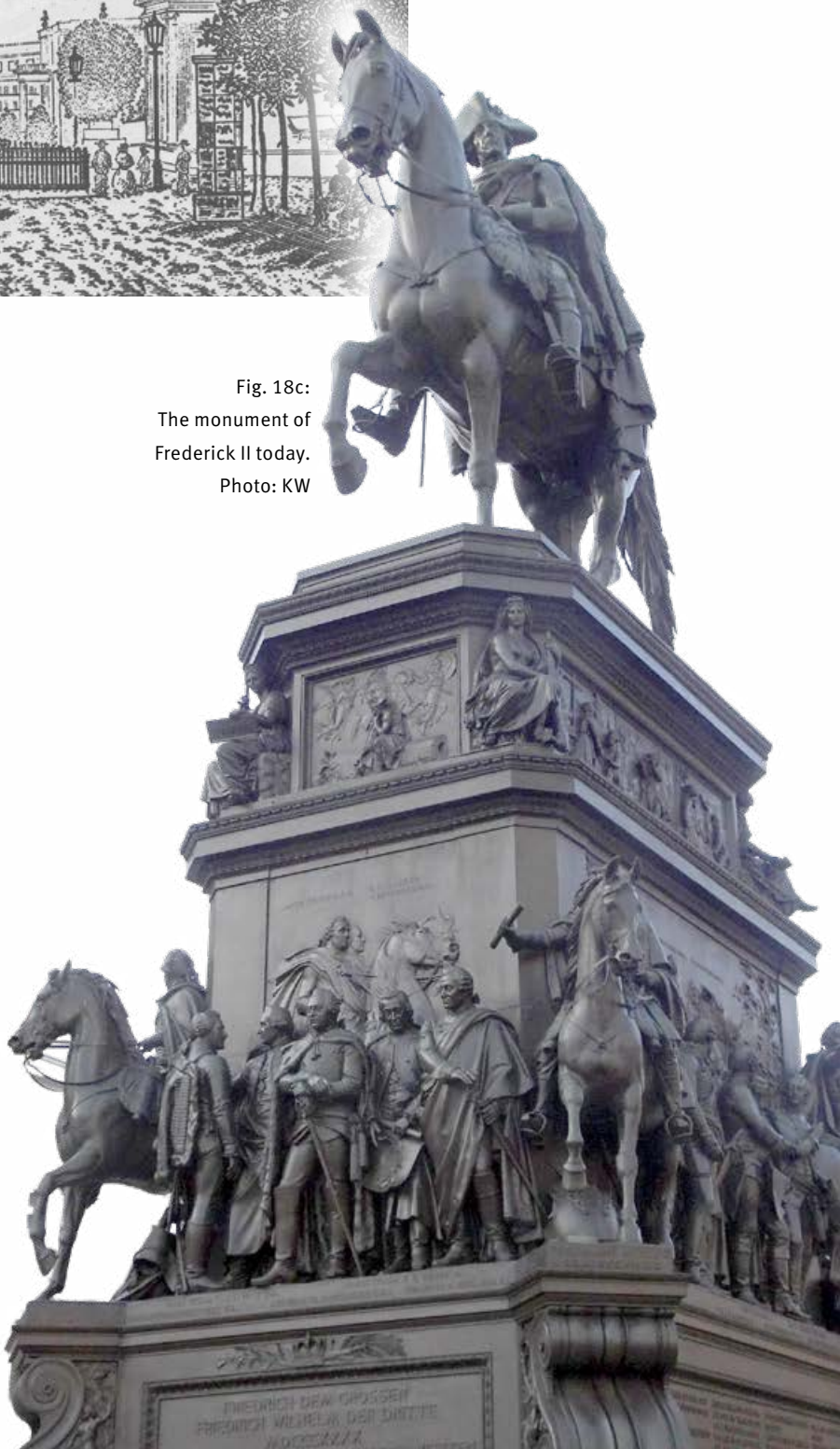

Fig. 18c: The monument of Frederick II today. Photo: KW

wrote ten chapters about the new nation. For comparison: the diplomats had stayed twice as long in France, but Kume limited himself to nine chapters. Much had changed since the Takenouchi Mission!

Germany was of particular interest to Japanese politicians because they recognized parallels with their own situation. Japan, too, wanted to secure a place for itself among the established powers, and was closely observing how this could be achieved.

Bismarck's Speech

What most impressed the members of the Iwakura Mission was a speech by Bismarck. On 15 March, the chancellor hosted a formal banquet in honor of the Japanese diplomats. In his toast, he explained that, although the introduction of international law was under discussion, it would not help weak countries assert their rights. Japan must therefore strive to gain strength. He wished Japan every success in modernizing the country, emphasizing that Germany had no interest in joining England and France in the race for colonies.

Fig. 19: Photo of Bismarck from the collection of Kido Takayoshi.
Published in Kasumi Kaikan (ed.):
Uchinaru kaikoku ("The Country's Inner Opening"), 1993

The New Germany as a Model

The insights of the Iwakura Mission inspired Japan's modernization efforts. What they had seen in Germany also influenced the measures taken. For example, the German constitution had an impact on the constitutional debate in Japan. German universities, in particular, were regarded as exemplary. Consequently, Japan organized its medical education following the German model. Some of the younger members of the Iwakura Mission stayed in Berlin to study. Among them were Shimizudani Kinnaru and Bōjō Toshiaya, who went on to have distinguished careers after returning home.

The German military system became very important for Japan. While plans had previously been made to model the Japanese army on the French, after the return of the Iwakura Mission it was decided that Japanese generals should instead take the German army as their model.

Fig. 20: Japanese students in Berlin.
Published in Kasumi Kaikan (ed.):
Uchinaru kaikoku ("The Country's Inner Opening"), 1993

Fig. 21: Medal commemorating the 25th anniversary of William's accession to the throne in 1886.

Fig. 22: Medal commemorating the 90th birthday of the emperor in 1887.

Fig. 23: Funeral procession for William I.

The Emperor's Final Years

Although King William I was a controversial figure when he ascended the throne in 1861, he had won over a broad majority of the population by the time of his death on 9 March 1888. Contemporary reports estimate that between 100,000 and 300,000 citizens paid their respects at the lying-in-state of the monarch.

Did William I deserve the epithet "the Great", as his grandson William II tried to bestow upon him? The answer to this question varies depending on one's political leanings. The first German emperor, whose collection Künker has the honor of auctioning, was certainly a man who shaped his era and his country. His action even had repercussions as far away as Japan.

Fig. 24: Mosaic depicting the three Prussian kings in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church: Frederick William IV, William I and his son Frederick III, who, due to his serious illness, was to reign for only 99 days.

On Prussian-Japanese Relations from the End of the Shōgun Era to the Beginning of the Taishō Era

By Michael Autengruber

Prussia's Path to Japan

From the start of the Edo period in the early 17th century, the shōguns of the Tokugawa dynasty had assumed effective governing power in Japan. They had largely stripped the tennō of political power, banned Christianity, strictly regulated foreign trade and almost completely isolated the country from the Western world. However, this era, which lasted over 250 years, also marked the longest period of peace in Japanese history.

After the Americans had used military force to set foot on Japanese soil in 1853, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce (Harris Treaty) between the United States and Japan was signed in Shimoda on 29 July 1858 by the US consul Townsend Harris (1804-1878) and the Rōjū Hotta Masayoshi on behalf of Shōgun Tokugawa Iesada (1824-1858, in office since 1853). This treaty further deepened and institutionalized Japan's engagement with the West.

Under the leadership of Friedrich Albrecht Graf zu Eulenburg (1815-1881), extraordinary envoy and minister plenipotentiary (Fig. 01), Prussia's East India expedition (known as the Eulenburg expedition) traveled to Chin, Siam and Japan from 1859 to 1862. As part of this exhibition, a comprehensive treaty of amity and commerce was concluded between Japan and Prussia on 24 January 1861 in Edo, signed by Eulenburg and Norimasa Muragaki (1813-1880) on behalf of Shōgun Tokugawa Iemochi (1846-1866, in office since 1858).

Fig. 1: Friedrich Albrecht Graf zu Eulenburg, image in: Muschler, Reinhold Conrad: Philipp zu Eulenburg sein Leben und seine Zeit. Leipzig 1930. Wikimedia-commons 2014 user: Alohaakua

The Takenouchi Mission and the Iwakura Mission in Berlin

Just a few months after the coronation of William I, the shōgunate dispatched the Takenouchi Mission, comprising 40 people, in January 1862 to Europe. It was named after Takenouchi Yasunori (1807-1867), Governor of Shimotsuke Province, who was the mission's formal head. Shibata Takenaka (1823-1877) acted as the mission's de facto leader under his authority. On 18 July 1862, the Mission arrived in Berlin by train for a reciprocal visit following the Eulenburg expedition in the previous year.

Over the course of a few years, the political situation in Japan had changed fundamentally. Following the Meiji Restoration, Tennō Mutsuhito (1852-1912; in office since 1867 as Meiji tennō (Fig. 2)) came to power in 1868. This resulted in the abolition of the shōgunate and marked the beginning of the country's systematic political and social orientation towards the West.

In August 1872, the Meiji tennō dispatched the Iwakura Mission to Western nations. It was named after its leader, Prince Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883), who acted as former foreign minister and acting ambassador. The delegation comprised 48 official participants, as well as around 60 students, some of whom remained in the visited

countries, including Berlin, to pursue further education. The Mission itself stayed in the German Empire from 5 March to 17 April 1873.

The Brother of the German Emperor Visits Japan

Henry Prince of Prussia (1862-1929) was the younger brother of Emperor William II (1859-1941; reigned 1888-1918), and thus a grandson of Emperor William I. After completing secondary school, he joined the Imperial Navy as a 15-year-old naval cadet in 1877, staring his career as an officer. Promoted to officer candidate

Fig. 2: Mutsuhito, The Meiji Emperor, partly colored photograph by Uchida Kuichi (1844-1875) from October 1873 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, Department of Photographs no. 1986.1064a). Wikimedia-commons 2014, user: Alohaakua.

Fig. 3: Prince Henry of Prussia and his honorary delegation in Japan, photograph from October 1879, image in: Pantzer, Peter und Saaler, Sven: Japanische Impressionen eines Kaiserlichen Gesandten . Karl von Eisendecher im Japan der Meiji-Zeit. Munich 2007. Wikimedia-commons 2013 user: Ras67

Fig. 4: Lieutenant Prince Henry of Prussia, photograph of 1881. © General administration of the former ruling House of Prussia.

(Fähnrich) as early as in 1878, he undertook a round-the-world voyage as part of his training from 1878 to 1880. He interrupted this voyage with an about five-month stay in Japan between October 1879 and March 1880.

During this stay, he traveled the country incognito and was deeply impressed by its culture and nature. In Suita, near Osaka, an incident occurred in which Henry was arresting while hunting and detained for one night in the prefectural prison (Fig. 3). During the same time, the Meiji tennō granted him several audiences. This round-the-world voyage is documented in the book "Des Prinzen Heinrich von Preußen Weltumseglung. Original-Erzählung für die Jugend" written by C. V. Derboeck (Leipzig 1900), while the Historical Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs contain a detailed, multi-volume record of his time there (Fig. 4).

In 1900, Henry – by then a senior flag officer (Konteradmiral) and commander of the German East Asia Squadron – visited Japan once again as part of an inspection and diplomatic mission to foster German-Japanese relations prior to the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion in China. On 29 May 1900, he was received in an official audience by the Meiji tennō.

After the death of the Meiji tennō (Fig. 5) on 30 July 1912 in Tokyo, Grand Admiral Prince Henry (Fig. 6) was dispatched on an official mission to attend the funeral ceremonies on 30 September 1912 in Tokyo (Fig. 7). He left Kiel on 19 August, traveling by rail via Berlin, Königsberg, Sankt Petersburg to Moscow. He then continued on the Trans-Siberian Railway via Samara, Omsk, Krasnojarsk, Chita to Harbin. The train derailed in Chita, causing a 12-hour delay. He then transferred to the East China Railway in Harbin, which took him through Manchuria via Mukden (Shenyang) to Port Arthur (Lüshunkou). From there, he traveled by ship to Japan, arriving in Tokyo on 11 September. After the funeral ceremonies, he was received by the new (Yoshihito, 1879-1926; reigned 1912-1921/1926) in an audience between 1 and 3 October. The Taishō tennō was the son and successor of the Meiji tennō.

Prince Henry's keen personal interest in Japanese culture and history significantly contributed to strengthening German–Japanese relations between around 1880 and 1914.

Fig. 5: Meiji tennō [明治天皇], painting by
Takagi Haisui [高木背水] (1877-1943) around 1914/1915,
depicted in the book 皇室皇族聖鑑 明治編
[The imperial family and the imperial household:
The Meiji era], Tokyo 1933.
Wikimedia-commons 2023 user: ABCzGT

Fig. 7: The catafalque of the Meiji tennō, postcard of 1912. © Edo-Tokyo Museum Collection
ID 95651306-95651308; https://www.edohakuarchives.jp/detail-43392.html

Prince Henry with his entourage in Japan in 1912,
photograph of 1912. © General administration of the
former ruling House of Prussia.

Fig. 6: Prince Henry of Prussia, Grand Admiral
of the German Fleet, photograph postcard from ca. 1911.
Private possession

Die Autorin Dr. Ursula Kampmann

The article “Prussia at the Time of the Iwakura Mission” was written by Dr. Ursula Kampmann. A trained numismatist, she founded her numismatic press service FAMA GmbH after working in the coin trade for ten years. Ursula Kampmann is also the founder of CoinsWeekly, known as GekkanCoins in Japan, an international online magazine about numismatics that is read in over 190 countries today. Her articles have been translated into more than 20 languages. She has received multiple awards for her ability to convey numismatic insights to a general audience in an engaging manner.

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SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR AUCTION „THE IMPERIAL COLLECTION“

KÜNKER AUCTION SALE 442 ON 23 JUNE 2026 IN OSNABRÜCK

Russian Empire
Nikolaus I, 1825-1855. 1 ½ Roubles (10 Zlotych) 1834,
St. Petersburg, for Poland. Extremely rare in this condition.
Magnificent patina. Proof.

Russian Empire
Nikolaus I, 1825-1855. 1 ½ Roubles (10 Zlotych) 1835, St. Petersburg.
Family rouble. Extremely rare. Only 36 pieces struck. Cabinet piece.
Magnificent patina, almost uncirculated.

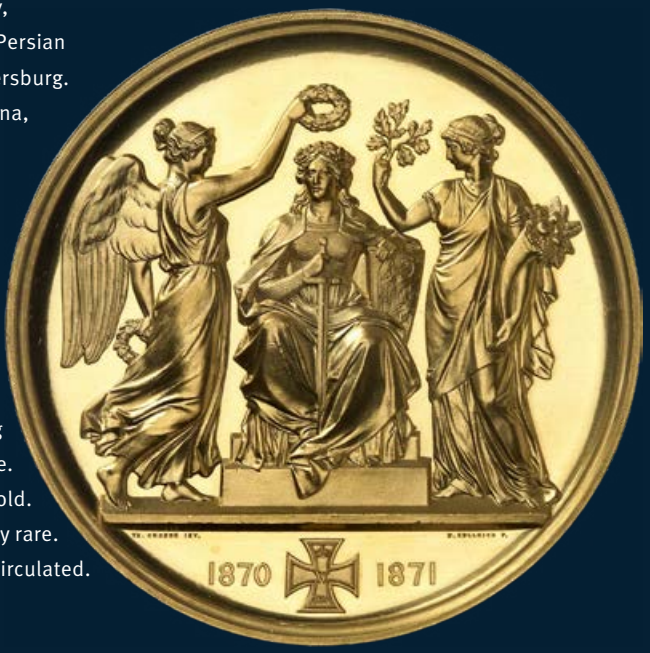
Kingdom of Prussia
Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 1840–1861. Gold medal in the weight
of 50 Ducats, 1855, by F. W. Kullrich, struck in honor
of Field Marshals H. D. L. York, Count of Wartenberg,
G. L. Blücher, Prince of Wahlstatt, and A. Count Gneisenau.
Extremely rare in gold. Almost uncirculated.

Russian Empire
Alexander I, 1801–1825. Gold medal in weight of 25 Ducats, 1818,
by H. F. Brandt, commemorating the laying of the foundation stone
for the Victory Monument on Kreuzberg in Berlin, together with King
Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, in memory of the victories over Napoleon I.
Extremely rare. Magnificent specimen. Almost uncirculated.

Electorate of the Palatinate
Philipp Wilhelm, 1685–1690. Silver medal, 1688, by G. Hautsch,
commemorating the French invasion of the Palatinate.
Rare. Beautiful patina, extremely fine.

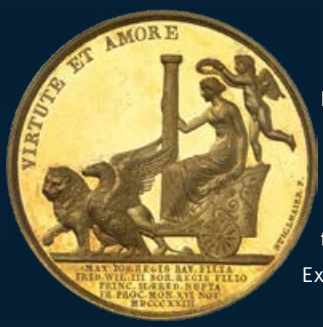
Electorate of Brandenburg
Friedrich Wilhelm, the Great Elector, 1640–1688.
Gold medal in the weight of 3 Ducats, n.d. (1656), by J. Höhn, commemorating the support of the Swedes against Poland in the Battle of Warsaw.
Extremely rare. Extremely fine.

Russian Empire
Nikolaus I, 1825–1855.
Silver medal, 1829, by V. Alexeev, commemorating the visit of the Persian prince Khusran Mirza to St. Petersburg.
Extremely rare. Magnificent patina, almost uncirculated.



Kingdom of Prussia
Wilhelm I, 1861–1888.
Gold medal in the weight of 120 Ducats, 1871, by E. Weigand and F. W. Kullrich.
General's medal commemorating the victory over France.
Only 25 pieces struck in gold.
Extremely rare.
Extremely fine-uncirculated.

Kingdom of Prussia
Friedrich II the Great, 1740–1786.
Silver medal, 1742, by M. Holtzhey, commemorating the Peace of Wroclaw on 11 June.
Extremely rare. Attractive patina, extremely fine.



Kingdom of Prussia
Friedrich Wilhelm III, 1797–1840. Gold medal in the weight of 12 Ducats 1823, by J. Lösch and B. Stiglmaier, commemorating the marriage of his son Friedrich Wilhelm (later King Friedrich Wilhelm IV) to Elisabeth Ludovika, the fourth daughter of King Maximilian I (IV) of Bavaria.
Extremely rare. Extremely fine-uncirculated.

Electorate of Brandenburg
Friedrich Wilhelm, the Great Elector, 1640–1688. Silver medal n.d. (before 1663), by J. Höhn and C. Melchior, presented as a gift to foreign envoys. Very rare. Extremely fine.

Russian Empire
Nikolaus I, 1825–1855.
Silver medal, 1829, by V. Alexeev and A. Klepikov, commemorating the Peace of Adrianople (Edirne) with Turkey. Very rare. Attractive piece. Almost uncirculated.

Kingdom of Prussia
Friedrich (III) I, 1701–1713. Silver medal, 1712, by Chr. F. Lüders, commemorating the birth of his grandson Karl Friedrich (later King Friedrich II, the Great). Extremely rare. Fine patina, extremely fine.

Kingdom of Prussia
Friedrich Wilhelm IV, 1840–1861. Gold medal in the weight of 50 Ducats 1855, by F. W. Kullrich, after a design by L. Rosenfelder, commemorating the 600th anniversary of the city of Königsberg, donated by the festival committee.
Extremely rare in gold. Almost uncirculated.

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