An Elegant Lady from the Westerwald
By Salvatore Mazzone

Mettlach at the AMOCA Museum
Mettlach Artists, Motifs and Styles
By Roy De Selms

Otto Hupp   Fritz Quidenus   Hans Wilhelm Schultz

Join us in Charleston, SC - August 16 - 20

A Brief History Brauerei zum Münchner Kindl
By Walter Swett
Mettlach at the AMOCA Museum - Part 5b
Mettlach Artists, Motifs and Styles

By Dr. Roy C. De Selms, SCI Master Steinologist

This is part 5b in a series of articles describing 19th Century German history, culture and folklore, and the artists, motifs, styles and techniques of the Villeroy & Boch firm at Mettlach (VBM) using items from the Wilson Mettlach Collection at the American Museum of Ceramic Art (AMOCA) in Pomona, CA. For convenience, references to The Mettlach Book by Gary Kirsner are abbreviated as TMB.

This article continues to describe VBM styles in chronological order from Medieval to Modern, the VBM artists that used and/or originated them, and the motifs those artists used. Art styles as discussed here are considered European because Asian, African, Persian, Middle Eastern etc. overlapped only minimally with some notable exceptions in the modern era.

Otto Hupp (b. Düsseldorf 1859 - d. Schleißheim 1949) was an engraver and heraldic artist who drew more than 6,000 coats of arms and published many printed works. He also provided numerous designs to VBM, although none were signed and stein collectors knew little about him until Thérèse Thomas’ survey article in Prosit, Sept. 1994. Hupp’s personal correspondence and signed sketches preserved by Hupp’s daughter, along with artistic traits common to his works, help to identify Hupp’s hand. Once you have seen several examples, others are readily identifiable. The magnificent “German Unification” plaque #2013, titled Reichsadler und Wappen deutscher Städte (Imperial eagle and arms of German cities), is among his best works (fig. 1). It is a very impressive 27.5” in diameter!

Most—if not all—of Hupp’s works for VBM were produced using colored slip glazes, in combination with etched areas. A good example is VBM #2002 (fig. 2), one of Hupp’s best known steins. The central image of a shield bearing the Munich Child is executed with colored glaze, while the background is etched. (Note the variation of color within the shield, the child’s face and the halo (fig. 2a), versus the uniformity of color in the etched background.) TMB uses the terminology “etched and glazed” for these works, although it is used inconsistently (see VBM “Etched and Glazed”, Prosit, Sept. 2021).

The original catalog title for this stein is München mit Bier - spruch (Munich with Beer Saying). The verse reads

Wer nie mit einer vollen Maass
auf einem Münchner Keller sass,
der weiss nicht was vor anderen Völkern
der Liebe Gott den Bayern gab.

He who has not sat in a Munich cellar with a full liter of beer, doesn’t realize how God favored Bavarians above others.

The popular city steins for Berlin (#3024) and Munich (#3043) are shown in figure 3. Although listed as etched in TMB, these steins are actually glaze-colored with an etched background.

The stein in figure 4 (#2012 – Sinnbilder der Hansa or Symbols of the Hanseatic League) depicts several emblems of Hanseatic cities. Listed in TMB as “etched and mosaic,” it is more properly classified as “etched and glazed,” as an examination of the city symbols reveals (fig. 4a).

A highly sought and very attractive stein (#2034 - fig. 5) might be referred to as an “Arabesque” or “Islamic” motif. TMB de-
scribes this stein as “Mosaic”, but there is no comparison in either technique or appearance with the ancient Greek “Mosaikos” and Roman “Mosaic” where stone fragments were assembled and fitted together to make the designs. The blue and white color combination with gilded detail is very pleasing. Here we again have glazed lines and etched design backgrounds.

Hupp also had a penchant for Christian religious themes. This is well documented in the vase with symbols of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (#1857 - fig. 6), the authors of the first four books of the New Testament. These books were originally written in “Koine” (Classical Greek) because three of the apostles traveled north along the Mediterranean where that language was predominant. (Koine is related to modern Greek like Latin is related to modern Italian.) However, St Mark traveled south to Egypt and founded the Coptic Christian faith still practiced in Egypt, Ethiopia and a few other North African locations.
The Christian theme was carried over to the master stein with St. George slaying the dragon (#2015 - fig. 7). This Bringkrug (carrying stein) depicts the legend of St. George and the Dragon which tells of Saint George (280 - 303 AD) of Cappadocia (modern day Turkey) taming and slaying a dragon that demanded human sacrifices, thereby rescuing a princess chosen as the next offering. It is probable that the dragon shown here was actually a crocodile. Crocodiles were not uncommon in Turkey, the Middle East and along the Nile in nearby Egypt. By the 5th century, the veneration of Saint George had reached the Christian Western Roman Empire as well, and in 494 George was canonized as a saint by Pope Gelasius I as being among those "whose names are justly revered among men, but whose acts are known only to God". The VBM title for this stein is St. Georg mit dem Drachen und Spruch (St. George with the dragon and verse). The saying reads Mit Gott und St. Georg (with God and St. George).

A somewhat similar theme is shown in fig. 8 (#1786 – heilige Florian mit Drachenhenkel, or Holy Florian with dragon handle), as the patron saint of firemen saves a city which has been set aflame by the dragon, quenching the flames with beer.

Two very popular trade steins are #1856 (Deutsche Reichs Post – Imperial German Post Office) and #2075 (Sinnbilder der Eisenbahn – Symbols of the railroad). Both of these steins are a combination of etched and glazed.

A twisted ribbon on the Postman’s stein (fig. 9, #1856) bears the toast Postmanns Heil! stosst an Postmanns Heil (Hail the Postman! Toast the Postman’s well being).

The Railroad stein (fig. 10, #2075), often mistakenly referred to as the Telegrapher’s stein, includes the Imperial eagle, telegraph poles and wires, the winged wheel of transportation, and a train engine fueled by Hofbräu Bier on the inlay.

The words on the lid (Nur immer einen guten Zug) translate as "Always another good chug," with the same double meanings in German and English.
A set of twelve steins depict trades being practiced at the onset of the 20th century. Three of these which were centuries old by that time are shown in figure 11a (Mason, #2724), 11b (Artist, #2725) and 11c (Brewer, #2728).

Historically, German universities offered education in theology, law, philosophy (including the natural and social sciences and the humanities), and medicine, leading to a professional career. Each stein in the set of eleven so-called “book steins” honors a profession in the form of books bearing the titles and authors that were required reading for that field of study. Figure 11a shows VBM #2001 I (Theology), 11b shows #2001 A (Law) and 11c is #2001 B (Medicine).

It seems fitting to end our review of Hupp’s work with the magnificent Hohenzollern and Hapsburg plaques (figs. 12a and 12b) which encompass his favorite themes of heraldry, religion and iconography. These plaques are described in the TMB as etched, but it is apparent that other decoration techniques favored by Hupp are present as well.
Song and music (Gesang und Musik) are known to be a means to soothe men’s souls. Figure 17 (VBM #2581) portrays a women’s choir.

Last, but not least in this category, is bowling (fig. 18, VBM #2958). In Germany this social sport played with 9 pins is called Kegelspiel (skittles) and was the forerunner of our bowling played with 10 pins. Almost every city in America has a public bowling alley, and private lanes have been installed in some large estates, including the White House.
In VBM #2582 stein Quidenus turns to a humorous theme with a moral message. The scene shows a jester holding forth from atop a table, while his audience laughs at the fool (figure 19). The obvious moral is that it takes a fool to pay credit to a fool. This has always been the case, but is especially pertinent in today’s atmosphere.

One of Quidenus’ most popular steins is a humorous portrayal of a Victor von Scheffel poem telling the story of a student who eats and drinks for three days at the Black Whale Tavern in Ascalon (VBM #2583, figure 20). When presented with the bill that he can’t pay, the offender is thrown out by the Nubian slaves. The ever true moral is that one shouldn’t consume what he can’t pay for. This can be applied to today’s climate and waste crises, i.e., “Don’t misuse what you can’t afford to clean up.”

Figure 21 (VBM #2809) embracing the story of Faithful Eckart has another moral lesson that continues to be appropriate today as it has always been. Faithful Eckart was a character written about by Georg Wickram in a 16th C farce, and later in 1813 by Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe. The text on the lid reads Verplaudern ist schädlich, verschweigen ist gut. (Gossip is harmful, silence is good.). The corollary to this of course is “If you don’t have something good to say, then don’t say anything at all.”

Quidenus was also responsible for several sets of related steins. The first of these depicts traditional occupations (figs. 22a-c): Night Watchman (Nachtwächter, #2937), Hunter (Jäger, #2938) and Barmaid (Kellnerin, #2939, photo credit to Allen Hopp).

Figures 23a-c are another set of three steins representing areas of southern Germany: Ober Bayern (Upper Bavaria, #3142), Tirol (Tyrol, #3143) and Schwarzwald (Black Forest, #3144).

This last set of steins (fig. 24a-c) depicts progressive stages of romance: the meeting (#437/3078), courtship (#439/3080) and the marriage proposal (#438/3080). These steins are marked BAVARIA and made by VBM late in the game in a less expensive format reflecting the economic turmoil in Germany. Their designs foreshadow the style of Poster Art which will be discussed in detail later.
Hans Wilhelm Schultz of Hanau was a VBM artist who favored the grandiose as can be seen in these four examples of his work. The first two, 3.2 L. #1851 and 3.1 L. #1817, both have the lip of a pouring stein, and both stand about 18" tall. The second two, 5.7 L. #2102 and 5.5 L. #2126, are truly monumental, standing 23+ inches in height! All four of these masterpieces celebrate the ascendancy of Germany following defeat of the French in the Franco-Prussian war and the creation of the German Empire in 1871. The pride in German traditions and culture is quite apparent.

In the early 1800’s, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (aka, Turnvater Jahn) began a movement focused on the value of exercise and fitness, partially in response to Napoleon’s repeated aggression toward Germany. This movement gave rise to the Turnverein (gymnasts association) formed in many local villages and cities, and provided the theme for VBM #1851 (figs. 25a-c). The 4-F’s arranged like an Eisenkreuz (Iron Cross) are the first letters of the German words Frisch, Froh, Fromm, Freiheit (Fresh, Happy, Pious and Free), desirable goals for all. Note the fencing figure on the left side of the stein (fig. 25b), and the weightlifter with barbell on the right (fig. 25c). Turnvater Jahn is credited with inventing numerous forms of equipment for gymnastics, most of which today are still in use around the world and in the Olympic Games. The presence of oak leaves in the design symbolizes strength, and the seated figure of Germania looks forward to a united Germany in peace. There are also Christian symbols and the Turner’s motto GUT-HEIL or “good health”.

In addition to gymnastics and weightlifting, bicycling was a natural outgrowth of the focus on physical fitness. Schultz employed this theme on VBM #1817 (figs. 26a-c), and like other forms of exercise, it soon became a competitive sport. The cyclist in the central scene proudly displays medals of his past achievements on his chest, and holds a wreath of laurel leaves signifying victory. The banner above his head is a slight variant of the Turner motto ALL-Heil, meaning health to all. This may be the only Mettlach stein to depict a highwheel bicycle in three separate scenes! Note the other references to transportation: the winged wheel, the train and a man on horseback in the distance.

With stein #2102 Schultz (figs. 27a-c) pays tribute to the importance of the German system of higher education in producing the young men who will guide the nation’s future. The side scenes (figs. 27b, c) show two students enjoying the pleasures of song and drink, but in the company of their predecessors who serve as reminders of the responsibilities these young men must bear for their German homeland. Lest there be any misunderstanding of their patriotic duties, Schultz placed the figure of Germania and the shield with the single-headed Reichsadler (the Imperial Eagle of a unified Germany) at the front of the stein. The first two lines of the ever-popular song Die Brevitate Vitae (Latin: the brevity of life) appear in a banner to the right and left of the Imperial eagle: Gaudeamus igitur, Juvenus dum sumus. This provides a convenient link to the fourth of these steins.

Commonly known as the Symphonia stein, Schultz honored the great music composers and poets whose busts are seen encircling the upper part of VBM #2126 (figs. 28a-c): L. Beethoven; H.A. Marschner; R. Schumann; E. Geibel; V.v. Scheffel; F.P. Schubert, W.A. Mozart; and F. Jos. Haydn. A complete and comprehensive interpretation of this stein appeared in Prosit June 2009, so we only repeat the highlights along with a few other observations.

Taken together, the scenes on this stein represent the responsibilities to protect the nation, the unification of the German states as personified in Germania, and the promise of peace and harmony so long as the citizenry is prepared to preserve it. Each scene is accompanied with an appropriate musical score.
The center scene features the word Symphonia above a seated Germania with a harp and several cherubs surrounding her. Above her head are a lyre, a swan (symbol of peace and loyalty), and a radiant brewer’s hexagram. The musical score beneath this scene is the first line of the song Der Mai ist gekommen (May has come), meaning that Germania is now in the Spring of life and is coming of age as represented by the central figure.

The left side scene (fig. 28b) shows a student and a Turner (gymnast) joined together to protect Germania against Napoleon and pointing with a rapier to a unified Germany symbolized by the Reichsadler. This is further emphasized by the bust seen in the upper left corner: Ernst Moritz Arndt was an ardent and outspoken advocate for a unified Germany. The appropriate score below this scene provides the introductory notes to the song Auf, ihr Brüder, lasst uns wallen! (Get up brothers, let’s get going!).

The right side scene (fig. 28c) portrays a peaceful life of love and song, beneath a bust of Walther von Vogelweide, a celebrated 12th C. lyric poet who combined love themes with strong political views, apropos of the musical score which appears below the scene: Ännchen von Tharau by Simon Dach. The intensely patriotic love of country implicit in this stein may be conveyed by replacing Ännchen von Tharau with Germania.

The center scene features the word Symphonia above a seated Germania with a harp and several cherubs surrounding her. Above her head are a lyre, a swan (symbol of peace and loyalty), and a radiant brewer’s hexagram. The musical score beneath this scene is the first line of the song Der Mai ist gekommen (May has come), meaning that Germania is now in the Spring of life and is coming of age as represented by the central figure.

The left side scene (fig. 28b) shows a student and a Turner (gymnast) joined together to protect Germania against Napoleon and pointing with a rapier to a unified Germany symbolized by the Reichsadler. This is further emphasized by the bust seen in the upper left corner: Ernst Moritz Arndt was an ardent and outspoken advocate for a unified Germany. The appropriate score below this scene provides the introductory notes to the song Auf, ihr Brüder, lasst uns wallen! (Get up brothers, let’s get going!).

The right side scene (fig. 28c) portrays a peaceful life of love and song, beneath a bust of Walther von Vogelweide, a celebrated 12th C. lyric poet who combined love themes with strong political views, apropos of the musical score which appears below the scene: Ännchen von Tharau by Simon Dach. The intensely patriotic love of country implicit in this stein may be conveyed by replacing Ännchen von Tharau with Germania.

The final observation we make about this stein regards the musical score appearing below the lower handle attachment: the first two lines of the famous German student song Die Brevitate Vitae (Latin: the shortness of life).

Gaudeamus igitur, 
juvenes dum sumus, 
Post jucundam juventutem 
Post molestam senectutem 
Nos habebit humus.

Let us rejoice 
While we are (still) young. 
After a pleasant youth 
After a troubling old age 
The earth will have us.

Johannes Brahms set this poem to music in the academic overture played at graduations all over the world, familiar music which many of our readers will hear played at graduation ceremonies in May/June of each year.

That concludes Part 5b of this series of Mettlach at the AMOCA Museum. I extend thanks to Anna Sanchez, Collections Manager at AMOCA for photographs of items from the Robert Wilson Mettlach Collection, to Walt Vogdes for his careful and thoughtful editing. Part 5c will deal with M. Hein, T. Eyrich, P. Winkel and F. v. Stuck among others.