

A FEW GREEK MEDALS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF ROMANIA

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Abstract

This article presents a few Greek medals from the collection of the National History Museum of Romania. All three medals are dedicated to a specific Greek historical event, the first medal was made for the 1896 Summer Olympics, the second one for the celebration of the 60 years Anniversary of the National Bank of Greece and the third one to honor admiral Andreas Miaoulis.

Key words: medals, Olympic Games, National Bank of Greece, Andreas Miaoulis, 19th century.

The following Greek medals, which are presented in the lines below, come from the vast collection of the National History Museum of Romania. All three of them came from the Romanian Academy and entered the museum's collection in 1984, each of them having a different topic, related to an important sporting event, institution and to a personality.

CATALOG

1. Participation medal of the 1896 Summer Olympics, inv. no. 317900 (Pl. 1, Fig. 1) Bronze, 50 mm, 59.32 g, engravers: Nikiforos Lytras (1832-1904) and Wilhelm Pittner (1825-1901).

Ob. Seated Athena holding a laurel wreath with her right hand, over phoenix emerging from flames, and with her left hand a lance. Underneath her the name "ΑΘΗΝΗΑΙ" (Athena) and in the background a temple and the rising sun is represented. On the right side, in the middle area, close to a temple, is the text "ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑΚΟΙ / ΑΓΩΝΕΣ / 776. Π.Χ. 1896" (Olympic / Games / 776 B C. 1896), while in lower right side is the signature of the engraver "Ν. ΛΥΤΡΑΣ W. Ρ" (N. Lytras W[ilhelm]. P[ittner].).

Rv. Legend on five rows "ΔΙΕΘΝΕΙΣ / ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑΚΟΙ / ΑΓΩΝΕΣ / ΑΘΗΝΗΨΙ / 1896" (International / Olympic / Games / Athens / 1896), with a five pointed star on top, surrounded by a laurel wreath. In the lower part, under the ribbon of the wreath, is the name of the other engraver and medal producer "W. PITTNER WIEN".

Reference: M. 1896.

This medal is a participation medal of the 1896 Summer Olympics that was given to all of the athletes who participated at the first edition of the Games. It is believed that around 20000 pieces were struck, besides those given to the contestants the rest being sold to the public as souvenirs. This was the first sports organization of the Summer Olympics following their revival in modern times and were held in Athens,

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as ancient Greece was the birthplace of the games. The main venue was the Panathenaic Stadium and they took place from the 6th to 15th of April 1896. Fourteen nations with around 200 plus athletes participated in the Games (the number of contestants is debated, between 176 and 246), each of them being European except for the United States team, which won the most gold medals, eleven in total. Greece won the most medals overall, 47, while the highlight for the nation was the marathon victory by Spyridon Louis. It is worth mentioning the fact that no women participated in the games.

2. 60th Anniversary of the National Bank of Greece, inv. no. 317905 (Pl. 1, Fig. 2)
Silver, 54.4 mm, 73.6 g, engravers: Henri Dubois (1859-1943) and Georgios Jakobides (1853-1932).

Ob. The facade of the palace of the National Bank of Greece with the shining sun above. On the solar disc there is the coat of arms of the Greek Kingdom and in the exergue there is the year 1902.

Rv. In the center the effigies of four men are represented. Above them, between two five pointed stars, are their names “Γ. ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ Μ. ΡΕΝΙΕΡΗΣ Π. ΚΑΛΛΙΓΑΣ Σ. ΣΤΡΕΪΤ” (G. STAVROS M. RENIERIS P. KALLIGAS S. STREIT) and underneath the years 1841-1901 and the signatures of the engravers, left and right “H. DUBOIS INC.” – “Γ. ΙΑΚΩΒΙΑΔΗΣ” (G. Jakobides).

The medal was made for the 60th Anniversary of the National Bank of Greece, the first financial institution of the nation (1841-1901/02). It was established under the Kapodistrian government in the context of the newly created Greek nation. The palace of the National Bank of Greece was linked to two separate buildings in the 1840's, the “England” hotel of F. Feraldes and the aristocratic house of Domnanos, which had their exterior architectures modified in a neoclassical style.

The four personalities on the back of the medal were all linked with the founding and the later activity of the National Bank. From left to right they are:

1. Georgios Stavros (1788-1869) was the founder and the first governor of the National Financial Bank (1828-1869), which was the precursor of the National Bank of Greece. He was a member of the Society of Friends (Filiki Eteria) and a great benefactor for the nation (Notaras, Synodinos 2010 23-30).

2. Markos Renieris (1815-1897) was a lawyer, scholar and professor in the department of Law. He became deputy governor of the National Bank of Greece in 1861 and governor from 1869 until 1890. He published legal and literary papers.

3. Pavlos Kalligas (1814-1896) was a lawyer, writer, politician and economist. He was elected Speaker of the Greek Parliament from 1883 to 1885 and governor of the National Bank of Greece from 1890 to 1896.

4. Stefanos Streit (1835/37-1920) was a banker, lawyer and politician. He became deputy governor in 1889 and governor of the National Bank of Greece from 1896 until 1910.

3. The death of admiral Andreas Miaoulis, inv. no. 317912 (Pl. 1, Fig. 3)
Bronze, 42.6 mm, 48.24 g, engraver: Konrad Lange (1809-1856).

Ob. The effigy of Andreas Miaoulis facing left surrounded by two rows of text “Ο ΝΑΥΑΥΑΡΧΟΣ ΑΝΔΡΕΑΣ ΜΙΑΟΥΛΗΣ / ΤΕΝΝΗΘ. ΤΗ. Κ. ΜΑΙΟΥ ΑΨΕΘ - ΑΠΕΘ. ΤΗ. ΙΟΥΝ. ΑΩΛΕ”. Underneath the effigy is the name of the engraver “Κ. ΛΑΝΓΕ” (K. Lange).

Rv. In the center, a standing ancient female character is inscribing a column with the names of battles where Miaoulis took part. At the base of the column there is a laurel wreath, and on the sides the words “NAYTIKHI” and “APETHI”.

This medal is related to the historic series made by Konrad Lange, which depicts symbolic representations of the Greek Revolution of 1821. It was issued on the death of the admiral, in 1835.

Andreas Vokos, better known as Andreas Miaoulis (1765-1835), was a politician and admiral from Hydra. He held an important role in the Greek Revolution of 1821, as he took command of the Greek naval forces with many victorious naval battles. Following the assassination of Kapodistrias, he was chosen as one of the three Greeks who would hand over the crown to the young prince Otto along with Dimitrios Plapoutas and Konstantinos Votsaris. His son, Athanasios Miaoulis, was elected Prime Minister of Greece from 1857 to 1862.

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Explanation of the plates

Plate 1 – Fig. 1 - The participation medal of the 1896 Summer Olympics; Fig. 2 - The 60th Anniversary of the National Bank of Greece medal; Fig. 3 - The medal dedicated to admiral Andreas Miaoulis upon his death.

Planșa 1 – Fig. 1 - Medalia de participare la Jocurile Olimpice din anul 1896, organizate la Atena; Fig. 2 – Medalia realizată cu ocazia aniversării a 60 de ani de existență a Băncii Naționale a Greciei; Fig. 3 - Medalia dedicată amiralului Andreas Miaoulis după decesul acestuia.



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