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Medal struck in 1789 in Commemoration of the Polish Sejm Resolution on Army Enlargement, from the Collection of the Numismatic Cabinet of the National Museum in Krakow

The subject of this article is a medal of particular significance and value to the Numismatic Cabinet of the National Museum in Krakow. The first object registered in the Numismatic Cabinet records, it was donated to the museum by Jan Matejko in 1884. As the medal itself has never been thoroughly examined in recent Polish literature, there have been some inaccuracies in defining the striking of the medal. The obverse of the medal presents a monument (statue) of King John III Sobieski inaugurated on 14 September 1788. On the reverse, the iconography refers to a resolution passed on 20 October 1788 on the enlargement of the Polish army to 100,000.

The erection of the statue commemorated the 105th anniversary of the battle of Vienna, but the real reason for it was to gain public approval for the involvement of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Russo-Turkish war that broke out in 1787. In exchange for military assistance, the empress Catherine II would consent to reforms in Poland. Among the most crucial of them was the army enlargement resolution, which is the link between the iconography of the obverse and the reverse.

However, one must not forget that the medal was ordered by King Frederick William II of Prussia and given as a gift to King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. Therefore it cannot be considered as a medal commemorating the erection of the statue, as the Prussian government at that time was against the Polish-Russian alliance. An insight into the circumstances under which the medal was released proves that it was a tool of Prussian propaganda.

The medal is a work of Daniel Friedrich Loos, the Medallist to the Royal Court at Berlin, and his son Friedrich Wilhelm Loos. It was intended for sale, which is the answer for the multiple remaining specimens.